ROY BLAKELEY'S
SILVER FOX PATROL

By PERCY KEESE FITZHUGH

APPROVED BY THE BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA

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In the car in which Roy Blakeley and his friends have for a meeting place is discovered an old faded letter, dating from the Klondike gold days, and it appears to intimate the location of certain bags of gold, buried by a train robber who had held up a train bringing passengers home from the Canadian Northwest. The quest for this treasure is made in an automobile and the strange adventures on this trip constitute the story.

CHS-③A

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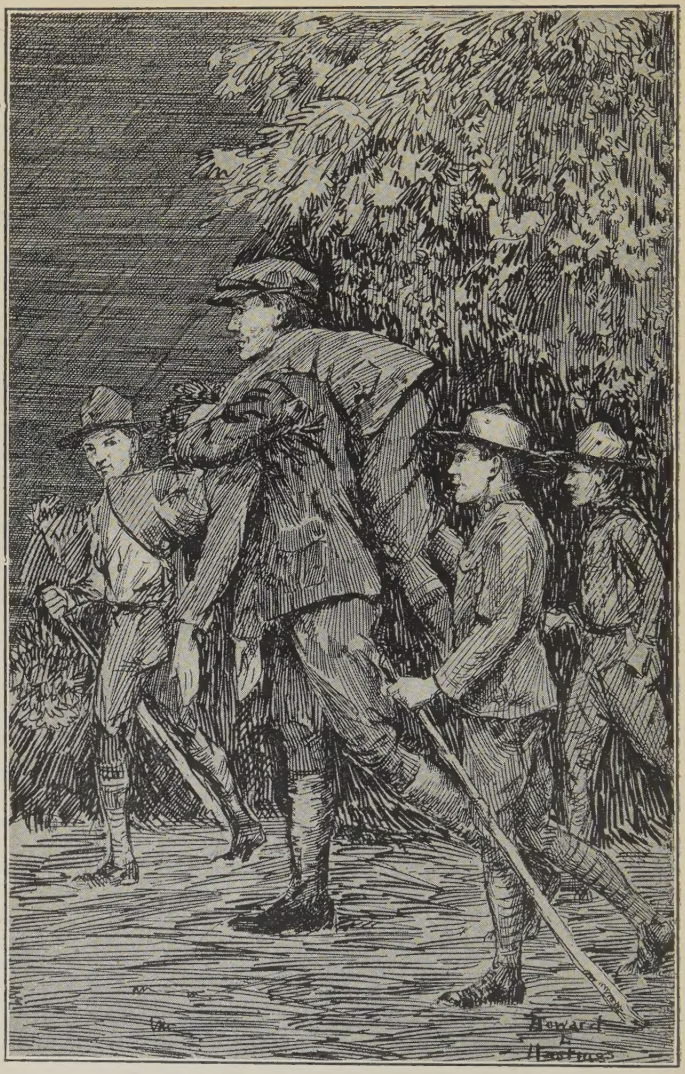

HARRY SLUNG MR. RAGTIME OVER HIS SHOULDER AND WE STARTED BACK.

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BY
PERCY KEESE FITZHUGH

Author of
TOM SLADE, BOY SCOUT, TOM SLADE WITH THE COLORS,
TOM SLADE WITH THE FLYING CORPS,
ROY BLAKELEY, ETC.

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ROY BLAKELEY'S

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CHAPTER I

WE MAKE A DISCOVERY

WHILE I was sitting on a rock down in our field eating a banana, I had a dandy thought, and I was going to begin this story by telling you about it, only now I forget what it was.

Anyway, Mr. Ellsworth says it's best to begin a story with conversation. He says conversations are even better than bananas to begin with. But, gee whiz, I like bananas. If I began with conversation that means I have to begin it with Pee-wee Harris, because he always does the talking in our troop. He can even talk and eat a banana at the same time.

He said, "Do you mean to tell me a railroad car can't have a dark past?"

"Sure," I told him; "maybe it went through a tunnel. Anyway, it's got a dark enough present with one kerosene lamp in it."

"I didn't mean that kind of darkness," he said; "I mean the kind that secrets are. You know what a dark secret is, don't you?"

"It's one that's all black," little Alfred McCord said.

"Sure," I said; "they're all colors. My sister's keeping one that's a kind of pale lavender."

Pee-wee said, "You're crazy; black is the only color for secrets. Look at that pirate in the movie play. Didn't it say he kept the dark secret about where the treasure was for years and years?"

"He kept it so long it faded," I told him. "Dark secrets are all right for old sailing ships, Kid, but when it comes to railroad cars—nix."

The three of us were sitting on the rock, looking at the old railroad car that had just been moved down to the field for us. Mr. Temple got that old car for us, so we could use it for a troop-room. The men had an awful job moving it from the siding at Bridgeboro Station. They ran it down to the river on movable tracks and brought it up on one of the barges. Getting it off into the field was the worst part. They had to leave it

right close to the river. Jiminies, we didn't mind that; the nearer the better, that's what I said.

One of the men that moved that car said it was an old timer. Anyway, it wasn't much good for a car any more, because the springs and the brakes and the couplings were all rusted away, and the roof leaked, only we fixed it with tar paper. Inside there was an old stove in the corner with a clumsy old high pipe railing around it. The windows were awful small and the plush seats were all old-fashioned and worn out. Up above the windows were old-fashioned wire cage things to put baggage in. The doors at the ends were round at the top and the little windows were that way, too. But, anyway, that old car would make one dandy meeting-place, that was one thing sure.

All the rest of the fellows had gone home to supper, and Skinny and Pee-wee and I were just sitting there looking at the car and thinking how we'd have a flag flying on it, and what color we'd paint it when we got money enough. We were thinking about the different things we'd bring down and put in it.

I said, "I wonder how old it is? It's a ramshackle old pile of junk, but that makes it all the

better, for a scout meeting-place." Because maybe you don't know it, but scouts don't like things to be too civilized, like.

"Maybe it has romance," Pee-wee said.

He got that word out of the movie play that had the old pirate ship in it. There was something in that play about the old ship being a monument of romance. I had to laugh, because it seemed so funny to talk that way about an old ramshackle railroad car.

"I mean adventures," he said.

"Oh, sure," I told him; "that car reminds me of an old Spanish Galleon, it's so different. Maybe some buccaneers used to have their den in it, hey? When I look at that car it reminds me of King Arthur and all those old fellows. You've got romances and adventures and things on the brain since you've been going down to the Lyric. What's puzzling me is how we're going to fix lockers in it for our stuff, and where we're going to hang our pictures."

Just then little Alf piped up in that funny way he has and said, "My mother doesn't believe in adventures."

"Well," I said, "she'll never pull much of a stroke with Scout Harris then."

"They always end by somebody getting dead," he said.

"Just the same," Pee-wee shouted, "I bet that old car is fifty years old. I bet if it could talk it would have a tale to tell——"

"A which?" I said.

"How do *we* know where it has been?" he kept up. "Why can't a railroad car have a—what-do-you-call it—a romantic past, just the same as a ship or an old house where—maybe where George Washington used to stay? How do *we* know?"

"Maybe it's the very car that George Washington crossed the Delaware in," I said, just to jolly him along.

"How about an old Indian stage coach?" he piped up.

"Kid," I said; "old sailing ships and wrecks and Indian stage coaches are one thing, and wheelbarrows and bicycles and lawn mowers and sewing machines and railroad cars are another thing. You see pictures of shipwrecks, but you never see pictures of old railroad cars. You should worry. Come on inside and let's measure for the lockers and then let's go home; I'm tired out."

Inside that car there was a funny kind of a

smell like there always is in railroad cars. It was kind of like dust and kind of like plush and kind of like smoke. The floor was awful smooth and shiny, just from so many people walking on it for years and years and years. All the woodwork was walnut and that was a sign of the car being old. A lot of the seats were broken and there was one place where two close together were broken. So we had decided to take them away and build our lockers there.

I had told the fellows in the troop that I would measure for the lockers before I went home, so now I began doing that with the little six-inch rule that I always carry. All of a sudden it slipped out of my hand and fell down between the frame and the plush part of one of those seats.

"Butter fingers!" Pee-wee said; "I'll get it for you."

I said, "I guess your fingers are smaller than mine, even if you have a bigger tongue than I have."

"My fingers are smaller than his," little Alf said; "I'll get it for you."

Gee whiz, his fingers were little enough, and skinny enough, that was sure, because the poor little codger lived down in the slums and I guess

he never had much to eat or much fun either, until he got in with us. That's one thing we're strong on—eats. Especially desserts.

But our young hero (that's Pee-wee), brushed us both aside with one hand, while he was digging down between the wood and the plush with the other.

"Got a hairpin?" he shouted.

"What do you think I am? A Camp-fire Girl?" I asked him. "Here, will a lead pencil do?"

He began poking around in there with the lead pencil and pretty soon he managed to lift up the corner of my little steel rule and drew it out with his fingers.

"Bully for you," I told him.

"There's something else down in there," he said. "Wait till I get it. It feels like a paper."

I said, "Don't bother; probably it's a time table."

"Maybe it's somebody's commutation ticket," he said.

Because that old car had been used as a way station up at Brewster's Centre until the railroad built a regular station, and I guess he thought that

maybe some one might have dropped a ticket down in that crevice in the seat.

With the lead pencil Pee-wee kept pushing around down there between the plush and the wood and waving us away with the other hand, because I was after my pencil.

"Come on, Kid," I said; "It's getting late. You should worry."

Just then a little corner of yellow paper came up with the pencil and slipped down again.

"Now you see," he said; "I almost had it."

"What good would an old last month's commutation ticket be now?" I asked him.

"Shut up," he said, all the while waving us back and wriggling the pencil up sideways in the crack; "I've got it, I've——"

"Foiled again!" I said, just as the paper slipped down. "Blackbeard, the pirate chief, refuses to give up the paper telling where the treasure is concealed. Sir Harris gnashes his teeth in rage!" That was just the way it was in the photo-play.

All the while, Pee-wee was very carefully moving the pencil so as to lift the paper, and each time the paper slipped down again. And all the while he kept waving us back. At last he got hold

of the corner of it with his fingers and hauled it out.

"*Ha, ha!*" I said, rolling my voice kind of—*you* know. "Sir Harris wrenches the tell-tale paper from——"

"*It's dated before you were born!*" Pee-wee fairly shouted. "It's a letter! Now you see! You said it was a time table. Look what it says in it—look!"

Gee whiz, he couldn't have half read it when he handed it to me. There wasn't any envelope, only an old sheet of paper, all yellow, and it had been folded so long that it almost fell apart where it was creased. It was filled with writing in lead pencil and it was so old and dirty that I could hardly read what it said. I guess Pee-wee would have stumbled through it himself, except that one thing that his eye happened to hit first of all, knocked him out.

"Now you see!" he said, all out of breath, he was so excited; "now you see! Look there!"

He pointed the pencil to one part of the letter where it said, *bags of gold.*

"And look *there,* too," he panted out, all the while pointing with the pencil, "*'dropped in his tracks with a mortal wound.'* So *now;* you think

you're so smart, with your wheelbarrows and sewing machines! You don't—you don't find bags of gold in time tables and commutation tickets—do you? You make me tired! This is a—a—deep laid plot, that's what it is. You know what mortal wounds are, I hope!"

"All right, Kid," I said; "you win. Only don't stab me a mortal wound with the lead pencil, and give me a chance to read it."

"If—if—if bags of gold aren't romance," he shouted; "then, what is? Tell me that."

Honest, that kid would find some kind of plots and adventures in a vacuum cleaner.

CHAPTER II

WE READ THE LETTER

It was pretty hard to read that writing, because it was so old and kind of smeary, and it took the three of us to make the letter out. Even we had to make up some words to fit into places where the creases were. But anyway, this is what the letter said:

March 7th, 1895

Dear Ann:—

This to tell you how I am robbed of two bags of gold by train robbers that derailed this train north of Steuben Junction and have slight injury to arm from bullet of one scoundrel. Two of our company are here dead, the one being brakeman who received mortal wound in making brave defence of life and property. This . . . that I am lucky not to fare worse, for gentleman of Boston is here dying while train speeds with all steam for Watertown where is hospital but . . . little hope. There will have wound dressed and stay if

doctors require but no danger. But so this will delay me in my return I write to say don't worry, and will mail in Watertown at latest, but likely in village before as . . . to get doctor.

So I have lost all I have of fortune by this outrage of scoundrels who I have made to pay dearly, shooting one and putting end to him as he dropped in his tracks with a mortal wound. This from car window. This other scoundrel would shoot back to revenge, his bullet hitting below my window sill and going through car to my left arm. But I paid him in good measure with a bullet in his leg, but conductor would not listen to stopping train after starting so I must be satisfied to let this scoundrel drag himself in forest with my two bags of my fortune. This because train must make steam for Watertown to care for dying. So . . . say I am rough diamond but . . . human life sacred even more than gold.

So I will come back to you and home with no riches for all this work but much love which no scoundrel can steal . . . better . . . to be thankful. The best reason I would pay this scoundrel . . . in one of those same bags . . . for you to plant. So you will know how you will now see me again without riches that was the same as you

said and you are right. And now it is over like you say nuthing but an adventur. I think more about how we can't have our bench under our Dahadinee Poplar thanks to these scoundrels. But I remembered that you said as you can easy see.

So now after such battle with theeving villens as you never see I am coming home and send this so you do not worry that I must stop in Watertown even if it is days and with much love.

Thor.

CHAPTER III

WE INSPECT PEE-WEE'S POCKETS.

PEE-WEE went jumping and dancing around like a cat having a fit, all the while waving the letter in the air.

"What is this? Some new kind of wig-wag signalling?" I asked him.

"Now you see! Now you see!" he started shouting. "Talk about your pirate ships! One fellow *dropped in his tracks*—what more do you want? Another one was wounded; see? Now!" I said, "Oh, I'm not complaining. Six would have been better, but one is better than nothing. You win, Kid. This old piece of rolling junk has had a past; I admit it. It's been through adventures."

"My mother doesn't believe in adventures, because somebody gets dead," little Alf piped up in that funny way he has.

"Well somebody got dead here, all right," I told him. "I wish we knew all about it."

"*Look—look here!*" Pee-wee fairly yelled. "*Here's the hole!*"

He had pulled a little wooden button, something like a cork, out of the woodwork at the side of the car, just a little below the window-sill, and was wriggling his finger in a little round hole that the daylight showed through.

"Now you see!" he shouted. "Talk about dark pasts——"

"You're right, Kid," I said; "we have to take off our hats to this old car. It has Blackbead's old schooner *Mary Ann* beaten twenty ways. You win."

"We've got to—*you* know—what do you call—it—fathom the mystery," he said.

"I guess there isn't any mystery, Kid," I told him. "But there must have been some wild scene, all right."

Honest, I can't tell you which had me more interested, that little round hole or the letter. Anyway, it seemed as if one proved the other. I could just see how the bullet had come in there and hit that fellow's arm, and kind of, I could see him leaning out of the window and I could see one of those fellows dead and the other one trying to limp away, and the train starting with

two men dead on it, and another one dying. You bet, Pee-wee was right; if that old car could only talk. . . .

"It happened before we were born," Pee-wee said.

"Yop," I said; "jiminy, you can't stop thinking about it, can you? This very same old car that we're sitting in was rattling along maybe a mile a minute, to get to a place where there was a hospital."

Gee whiz, we forgot all about measuring for the lockers, and just sat there in the car, gaping around. It seemed kind of different than before, on account of what we knew had happened in it. And I just couldn't stop thinking about that.

"Do you know what I think?" I said, all the while looking around. "I think there's a lot more about this car, too. I think it must have been in a wreck once; look at those shutters."

There were about half a dozen shutters that we hadn't been able to pull down, but the men had done it for us, and now I could see why it was they had stuck so. It was because they were all smashed and knocked out of shape. And besides that there was a long board fitted into the side of the car that hadn't always been there,

because it was soft wood, not like the regular wood of the car.

"What shall we do about it?" Pee-wee asked me.

"Nothing, as far as I can see," I told him. "I don't see that there's anything to *fathom.* I'll paste the letter in the troop-book, after we've shown it to the fellows."

Pee-wee looked terribly disappointed. I guess he had a wild idea that that robber was still beating it and that we could catch him if we hurried up. He seemed to think that he was on the trail of something or other.

That night we had our first troop meeting in the old car, and Mr. Ellsworth read the letter to all the fellows. He said it was very interesting to hear these shots out of the past (that was the way he said it), and how we could always think of our quaint meeting-place, as the scene of a truly remarkable adventure of days gone by. He uses dandy big words, Mr. Ellsworth does.

Then the troop settled down to making plans for going up to Temple Camp, because that's where we always go in vacation. Poor Pee-wee and his letter had to take a back seat. Mr. Ellsworth said that after all, up-to-date adventures

are better than old stale ones, and that we should worry about pirates boarding ships and robbers stopping trains and shooting and things like that, that happened a long while ago. He said that, because he's down on the movies, especially Wild West stuff, and he's always trying to keep us thinking about scouting. I've got his number, all right.

But, anyway, Pee-wee wouldn't let me paste that old letter in our troop-book. He just hung on to it. I don't know what he was thinking about, but I guess he had an idea that something would be *revealed.* That's his favorite word—*revealed.*

On the way home from troop-meeting, he gave me a free lecture. Gee, I wish you could have heard him.

"Suppose that pirate chief in the movies hadn't kept the—*you* know—the tell-tale papers," he said; "what would have happened? Do you think I'd let this letter be pasted in the troop-book? No siree! Look at that fellow—Ralph Rogers—in the Fatal Vow. He let the other fellow have the mortgage and see what happened. His old gray haired mother was turned out in the snow. No siree; safety first, that's what *I* say. Suppose a descendant of that robber——"

"Don't make me laugh, Kid," I said; "let's go in Bennett's and get a couple of cones. What do you say?"

That's one thing that Pee-wee was strictly up-to-date on—ice-cream cones. When it comes to ice-cream cones, even dark adventures have to stand in line. Believe me, many's the ice-cream cone that dropped in its tracks—I mean dripped —when he gave it a mortal blow.

I had to laugh to see him hiking alongside of me, with his belt-axe dragging his belt way down and his compass dangling around his neck like a locket. His pockets are always stuffed full of Lyric programs and clippings about missing people that he intends to find, and directions out of papers about how to do in case he should meet a lion or an elephant—on Main Street, I suppose. If he should bunk into a rattlesnake on his way to school all he'd have to do would be to haul out a clipping and then he'd know to "stare right at it with glaring eyes and it would retreat in terror." Honest, he's a scream. He read in "Boys' Life" that a grizzly is afraid of bright red, so he has a red glass in his flashlight. He's not taking any chances. *Be Prepared.*

I wish you could see that kid. He always car-

ries an onion with him, because he thinks if you stick a pen in an onion it will write invisible and then if you hold the paper over a fire the writing will come out clear. He's got his pockets full of invisible writing. I never saw any of it come out good and strong yet. The only thing that comes out good and strong is the onion.

Oh boy!

CHAPTER IV

WE MEET IN THE DEN, AT BENNETT'S.

ONE thing he always carries with him, and that's an old piece of storage battery out of an automobile. He found it on the bridge and he says a German spy left it there.

He has a black feather that he wears stuck in a button hole, because he says it was dropped by a raven. He's in the Raven Patrol, you know. My sister said it dropped out of a girl's hat.

When we got to Bennett's we were just going to buy a couple of cones, when who should come walking in but Grace Bronson. Grove Bronson is her brother—he's in our troop. He's one of the raving Ravens, too. They're crazy about tracking, the Ravens are—tracking and marshmallows. Right behind her, who do you think came walking in?

Oh boy, Harry Donnelle!

Maybe you don't know him. But anyway,

everybody in Bridgeboro knows him. And if you've read all the crazy stuff I've written about our adventures, you must know him. He's about twenty-six years old, that fellow is, and Mr. Ellsworth tried to get him to start a scout troop, but he wouldn't do it, because he said every night he has to kill a couple of Chinamen. He was a lieutenant in France and he got the Service Cross. He's got red hair. I bet Grace Bronson likes him a lot—gee whiz, you couldn't blame her. He's kind of happy-go-lucky, reckless—*you* know. He's Professor Donnelle's son, but anyway, he's not going to be a professor, because there's no adventure in it. He's been to Samoa and South Africa, that fellow has. He said if there was a tin spoon buried miles and miles away, he'd go and dig it up. That's the kind of a fellow he is. He had jungle fever, too, and a lot of peachy things.

He always stops and speaks to us, because he likes us, so that night he gave me a kind of a push and shoved my hat to the back of my head and said, "What are you doing, Rob Roy? Buying out the store? How would a *regular* plate of cream strike you?"

"I might if I were urged," I said.

"You don't have to urge *me,*" Pee-wee piped up.

So then all four of us went back where the tables were and I ordered pineapple and vanilla. Pee-wee ordered plain vanilla, because one color always looks bigger than two.

Harry said, "Well, how are the wild adventures coming on? Been tracking in the silent depths of Terrace Court Park lately? Any more leopards?"

I said, "Oh, we've been doing a lot of killing lately—killing time."

"How's the old car?" he said, "When are you going to have the grand opening?"

I said, "You'd better be careful how you speak about that old car; it has a past—a dark past."

Grace Bronson said, "Oh, isn't that perfectly *lovely!*"

"There's a mystery connected with it." Pee-wee said.

"No!" Harry said, kind of jollying Pee-wee. "How long has it been connected?"

"Twenty-five long years," Pee-wee said, all the while working away on his ice cream.

"Long ones, hey?" Harry said.

"Do you know what happened to the train that car was on once?" Pee-wee said.

"Come in on time?" Harry began laughing; because that's one thing the trains out our way never do.

"Worse than that," Pee-wee said; "here read this letter that we found way in under the stuffing of the seat."

The kid started digging down in his pocket and pretty soon that table looked like a church rummage sale.

"Did you *ever?*" Grace Bronson said; "what in the *world* is *this?*"

"Take your pick," I told her; "souvenirs of the boy scouts."

All the while Harry Donnelle was reading the letter and I could see he was interested, because he didn't bother to jolly Pee-wee about all the rest of that junk. When he was finished he didn't say a single word, only handed it to Grace and watched her while she read it, all the while drumming with his fingers on the table.

"And you *found* it?" she said. "Oh, I think it's too romantic for anything! Did you ever *read* such a letter! It carries you back to the old days. Just think how it was there all these years.

Who do you suppose Ann was? And it all happened before I was born. Isn't that *wonderful!*"

Harry said, "Oh, quite a few things happened before you were born."

Then he took the letter and read it through again, and then folded it in the old creases. Then he just said, "Humph!" After that he opened it very carefully and laid it on the table and read it again. Then he said, sort of as if he were thinking, "Bully old top, that fellow was. I'd like to have known him. He seems to have been made out of pretty good stuff."

"And he was so *brave,*" Grace said.

Jiminies, I'll never forget how Harry Donnelle looked that night while he sat there studying that letter. He just kept rubbing his tongue along his lips, and studying the paper, just as if he were trying to do an example.

After a while he said, "Funny; wonder what became of that other chap—or scoundrel as old Hickory-nut calls him."

"That's a good name for him—Hickory-nut," I said.

"I wonder who he was," Grace said; "and he was bringing seeds home for his wife to plant!

Isn't that lovely where he admits he's a rough diamond! Oh, I think he was *splendid.*"

"He was a hero," Pee-wee said.

"And he was bringing those seeds home to her," Grace said, "so they would grow up and they could have the same kind of a tree at home —oh, I think he was just *splendid!*"

"He was a bully old cheese," Harry said.

"He wasn't a cheese at all," Grace said, kind of all excited like. "He thought more of his home than he did even of his bags of gold. Even those seeds that he lost—oh, I think he was *fine!*"

Harry just looked at her, kind of smiling, and he said, "Thanks for your hint; it takes a girl to see that side of it. Those seeds may come in handy. What I was thinking about was, if that other chap——"

"He wasn't a *chap,* he was a *villain!*" she said.

"Well, whatever he was," Harry kept on, "if he was shot and had to limp, how far would he get before he had to drop the bags of gold. I was wondering if maybe he buried them. Buried treasure is the regular thing, you know. Hey, Scout Harris? Then I was wondering if he buried it, how somebody could find it. Just for a stunt, you know. More fun than sitting on the

porch, anyway—or playing tennis. How about that, Scout Harris?

"I kinder like what old Hickory says about paying him in good measure with a bullet in his leg. I have a kind of hunch he didn't get far—in those woods. Maybe he buried his pal and the bags at the same time—if he was able. Be pretty good fun looking into the affair, hey? Wish I knew who he was and where he is; then we might have something to go by. I'd never have thought twice about those seeds if it hadn't been for you, Grace. How about it, you kids? Scouts are supposed to know all about trees and things. What do you know about the Dahadinee poplar? We may be able to bang some fun out of this letter yet. Hey, Sir Walter?"

Grace said, "I think you're perfectly *heartless,* that's what I think. All you think about is the *adventure.*"

"Might as well take an auto trip in one direction as another," Harry said. "What's the difference as long as we're burning gasoline. Hanged if *I* know where Steuben Junction is, but I guess it's somewhere. No use hunting for old Hick—he may be dead. If you kids want to hunt up the Dahadinee poplar and see what you

can find out about it, I'll hunt up Steuben Junction, if there is such a place now. Then I'll get a couple of new tires and——"

"How about *me?*" Grace said.

"Oh, when we get up there we'll send you a post-card, nice and pretty, showing the village store," Harry said.

"Don't you care," Pee-wee told her; "we'll take Grove with us, and he'll tell you all about it when we get back."

CHAPTER V

WE BEGIN OUR INVESTIGATION

"It was lucky we stopped in Bennett's," Peewee said; "do you think anybody heard us talking about the treasure? Did you notice that fellow at the soda fountain—how he was kind of listening?"

"I think he's a pirate disguised as a soda clerk," I told him. "Maybe he'll foil us yet."

"We'd better come in two or three times each day and get sodas," the kid said, "then we can watch him."

"Good idea," I told him.

"Oh boy, won't it be great!" he kept on. "When do you think we'll start? We'll go down to the library to-morrow and find out about that poplar, hey? And I'll get a couple of big new bags to bring home the gold." Jiminy crinkums, that kid was already on his way home with the treasure. I expected to see him the next day with

a red sash on and a red cloth tied over his head and a dagger between his teeth.

I said, "Kid, don't get too excited; I've got Harry Donnelle's number all right. He's not counting on finding any treasure. He just wants some place to go, that's all. Maybe there's one chance in a hundred of finding any gold. Don't lose any sleep over it."

"The automobile ought to have a name," he said.

I said, "All right, we'll call it the good ship *Cadillac;* that's the kind of a machine it is."

"There ought to be a mutiny," he said.

"The only thing to mutiny will be the carbureter, or maybe the magneto," I told him, "and then we'll have to put in at some desert island and hunt for a garage."

"Will the whole troop go?" he asked me.

"Not while Harry Donnelle is conscious," I said. "I don't think he'll take more than three or four of us."

"That leaves plenty of room for the treasure," Pee-wee said. "Who will it be? You and I——"

"I'm going to ask him please to take Skinny, I know that," I said.

"I bet Grove Bronson will want to go after what his sister tells him," he went on. "He ought to go as her representative, hey? She's entitled to her share of the treasure—you can't deny that. Anyway, one of us ought to watch Bennett's."

Now this is the way I thought about it, because I know Harry Donnelle. I remembered what he said about how a fellow might just as well take an auto trip in one direction as another, and I didn't believe he was bothering his head much about finding buried treasure. That's just the kind of a fellow he is—happy-go-lucky. I guess that's why everybody likes him. But, cracky, I'm always game for an auto trip and I was crazy to have Skinny (that's little Alf) go on one, because he had never been in an auto or had any fun like that.

I guess I might as well tell you about Skinny, because the way things came out, it will be best if you know all about him. And especially because he was one of the *big four*—that's what Harry called us. Gee whiz, maybe we weren't very big, but we made noise enough. I guess as long as I'm at it, I'll tell you about the whole four of us, hey?

Anyway, you know all about Pee-wee, and I

guess you know all about me. I'm patrol leader of the Silver Foxes and it's some job. That's what makes me so quiet and sad like—I have so much trouble. It's such a nervous strain, I have to rub it with liniment. I should worry.

Harry Donnelle said that the reason he took Grove Bronson was, because Grove has the path-finder's badge and would be a good one when it came to hunting for something. But that wasn't the reason he took him at all. The reason he took him was, because he's Grace Bronson's brother. Maybe he thinks he can fool me, but he can't. Anyway, Grove is one of the raving Ravens (that's Pirate Harris's patrol), and he's a nice fellow, only he's left-handed, but he can eat four helpings of chocolate pudding. Gee whiz, that isn't so bad for a fellow that's left-handed. I knew a left-handed fellow up at Temple Camp who could sing dandy.

So that leaves only Skinny, because if I were to tell you all about Harry Donnelle's adventures, believe *me,* there wouldn't be any room for anything else, and my sister says I'd better stop using her note paper. Maybe you notice this story is pink—that's because it's written on pink paper.

Skinny's right name is Alfred McCord, and he

lives in a marsh shanty; there are a lot of those down near the river. He hasn't got any father and he lives all alone with his mother. They're awful poor, but Skinny should worry, because now he's in our troop.

He's a funny kid, Skinny is. All the fellows like him, but he's kind of queer. His hair is sort of streaky like, and he's awful white in his face. There's one funny thing about him and that is that he can pass most any merit badge test, but he can't seem to get out of the tenderfoot class. When he gets to be a first class scout, he'll have about a dozen merit badges waiting for him. He's kind of different from the rest of us and we call him our mascot, but anyway, all the fellows like him a lot.

So now you know about all four of us and about Harry Donnelle. You should worry about the rest of the troop.

The next day we went to the library and got a big book about trees. We couldn't find Dahadinee in the index, but anyway, we found something about another tree. This is what the book said about it, and I read it in a whisper to the other fellows:

"The Mackenzie or Balsam poplar sometimes attains in the forest a height of one hundred and fifty feet and a trunk diameter of five or six feet. When isolated from other trees it develops a rather narrow irregular pyramidal open top and its parti-colored leaves, as their dark green upper surfaces and light under surfaces show successively as moved by the wind, make it a handsome object.

"It is distinctly a northern tree, thriving along the banks which are tributary to the Mackenzie River, in a climate too severe for the existence of most other trees. In those cold regions it is far the largest and most graceful of all trees."

"I know where the Mackenzie River is!" Pee-wee shouted. "It rises in the northwestern part of Canada, takes a northerly course and flows into Beaufort Sea."

"Correct, be seated," I told him.

"That's up near Alaska," he said.

"Right as usual," Grove said; "let's hunt it up."

"You don't need to hunt it up," Pee-wee said;

"it's there. I had it in exams. in the third grade."

"Maybe it was there then," Grove said; "but how do we know it's there now? Safety first."

"How can a river move?" he whispered, because one of the librarians had her eye on him.

"That's all a river ever does," I told him; "did you ever know a river to stand still?"

So we hunted it up in the Atlas and sure enough, there it was, away up near Alaska and, good night, there was a river named the Dahadinee flowing into it.

"We've got the treasure; We've got the treasure!" Pee-wee began shouting.

"Shh!" I told him. "Don't you know you're in the library? Shhh."

CHAPTER VI

WE GET NEW LIGHT ON THE MYSTERY

THAT night Grove and Pee-wee and I hiked over to Harry Donnelle's house, to show him what we had copied about the poplar that we thought must be the kind of a one that was meant in the letter.

I said, "There isn't any such tree as the Dahidinee poplar in any of the books, but I think it must be the same as the Mackenzie poplar, because the Dahadinee River is up that way."

"Sure," Harry said; "I guess it's just a nickname for one of those skyscraper pines that you never see south of Canada. I shot a Canada lynx up one of them on Hudson Bay; they puncture the sky, those things." Cracky, that fellow's been everywhere.

Grove said, "How is it going to do us any good?"

"Well, I don't know that it is," Harry said; "and I'm not buying a yacht on the strength of

it, either. But I had a kind of an idea that we might bang into the woods north of Steuben Junction—that's up near the Canadian border about forty or fifty miles north of Watertown."

I said, "I guess that's a pretty lonely country, hey?"

"Oh, the people wear clothes up that way and live in houses," he said, "but it isn't exactly like Broadway and Forty-second Street."

Pee-wee looked kind of disappointed; I guess he thought that it was like South Africa up there. "Maybe it isn't so terribly civilized," he said.

"Well, it's more civilized than where the Dahadinee poplar grows, you can be sure of that," Harry said, "so don't think that we're going to pull any Christopher Columbus stunt. Everything up there has been discovered."

"Not the treasure!" Pee-wee shouted.

"Now you kids listen to me," Harry said, "and don't fall off the railing—especially Pirate Harris." He said that, because we were all sitting along the railing of the porch. He was sitting in a wicker chair, tilted back, and his feet stuck up on the railing.

"When I was in the city to-day," he said, "I

went into the big library situated in the dark morass on Fifth Avenue. Groping my way along its dark passages, I escaped the savage bookworms and ferocious authors who frequent its silent lairs, and made my way unobserved to the underground cave where the newspaper files are. Shh!

"There I examined the *New York Chronicle* of March eighth and ninth and tenth, eighteen ninety-five. You remember that old Hickory wrote his letter on March seventh? Well, here's a sort of condensed version of a newspaper article that I found. Don't fall backward Pee-wee, or you'll go plunk into the rose bush. Now listen."

Harry took out some pages in lead pencil writing and read them to us. This is what he read, because he gave me the pages afterward and I pasted them in our troop-book:

CANADIAN SPECIAL WRECKED NEAR BORDER.

FATAL DISASTER FOLLOWS HOLD-UP.

A fatal accident occurred yesterday morning to train number 37 of the Canadian

Grand Valley Railroad, when the bridge south of Steuben collapsed with the locomotive and four cars which fell in a mass of wreckage into the deep gully which the bridge spanned. It is supposed that the old fashioned trestle of wood had been weakened by the charring effect of the forest fires which had devastated the immediate neighborhood. Engineers are endeavoring to determine the exact cause with the view to fixing responsibility.

Two cars at the end of the train were not yet upon the bridge when the fatal plunge occurred and while the first of these hung in a precarious position, the brakeman and passengers of the last car had the presence of mind to release the coupling before the last car of the train was dragged into the chasm of the burning wreckage below. Several of the passengers of this last car, however, were in the car ahead at the time of the disaster and lost their lives.

A wrecking crew with physicians and nurses was immediately dispatched from Watertown, the nearest place of any size, but as yet, no survivor has been found amid

the charred wreckage, and it seems likely that the only passengers to escape death were four women and two men who were in the last car at the time of the disaster.

They were Mrs. Thomas Ellerton and daughter, of Fawnsboro, New York, Mrs. Manners of New Orleans, and a Miss Elsie Bannard. The two men were Thomas and Frederick Worrel, brothers.

The fatal catastrophe came as a termination to an adventurous trip, for the train was speeding with all steam for Watertown to secure medical treatment for several victims of a bold hold-up by two armed robbers, one of whom was killed by a passenger, who himself was later killed in the wreck.

"Guess that's about all of that one," Harry said, "and that was the end of our old pal Thor." Then he said, "Now here's part of another article that I copied out of the paper of the day after, so you see there were quite some happenings before the Boy Scouts started."

Pee-wee said, "Gee, I can't deny that a lot of things happened before the Boy Scouts started—look at Columbus, what he did."

"Now listen," Harry said.

BANDIT DIES AFTER CAPTURE

EDDIE TRENT, NOTORIOUS HOLD-UP MAN ENDS CAREER AFTER DARING TRAIN ROBBERY

Edward Conners, alias Eddie Trent, notorious through the Canadian northwest for his career of murder and robbery, paid the penalty of his last escapade in the hayloft of a barn near Evans Mills in upper New York, yesterday, where he was discovered by a sheriff's posse.

Trent had sought refuge in the barn after the killing of his companion, Wister, in their hold-up of the Canadian Special train. It is supposed that the two quarrelled in the woods north of Steuben Junction, and that Trent killed his pal in an altercation over their booty and was wounded himself in the affray.

The desperado was suffering from loss of blood and exposure at the time of his discovery, and lived but a short while, He had no

booty, and died refusing to confess how much he had secured in his desperate enterprise.

A pistol and knife were found upon him, the latter crusted with dried earth, which led to the supposition that he may have buried his booty in the woods near where the body of his pal was found. But a careful search of the locality revealed no sign of any recent digging. Trent, or Conners, was the robber who held up the Californian—and so on, and so on, and so on.

That's the way Harry finished up. There was a lot more about that robber, only Harry hadn't bothered to copy it.

"So there's the romance of an old railroad car for you," he said, "and if you can beat that with your Robin Hoods and Rob Roys and Captain Kidds and Jesse Jameses, why then you're some dime novelist. And I've got a kind of a hunch that the real truth about the little Strawberry Festival has never really been solved. A whole lot of things happened on that——"

"Momentous day," Pee-wee piped up.

"Right the first time," Harry said, "and then

came a—what-d'ye-call-it, a lapse of twenty-five years. *Lapse* is right, isn't it?"

"Sure, that's it—lapse," Pee-wee said.

"And meanwhile, the automobile was invented and the Boy Scouts were started and Scout Harris was wished onto the world. Now comes the last act of the drama—revealing the mystery—and the first thing to do."

"*Shh,* don't talk so loud," Pee-wee said; "the first thing to do——"

"Is to get a new tire and have the carbureter fixed. Then we'll wait for a favorable tide and sail away in the good ship *Cadillac.* What do you say?"

CHAPTER VII

WE PLAN OUR TRIP

THAT was always the way it was with Harry Donnelle; he'd laugh and make a joke about everything and jolly Pee-wee, but anyway, one thing was sure, and that was that we knew more about what happened away back on that day before any of us was born, than the man that wrote that last newspaper article. We knew that that fellow Trent didn't kill his pal, and we knew that he wasn't shot by his pal, either. We knew that some man who signed his name Thor did that, and we knew that there was a couple of bags of gold, too.

I said to Harry, "I wish you'd please be serious and tell us what you think."

"I think we'll take an auto trip up toward Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence," he said.

"Can Skinny go?" I asked him.

"Surest thing you know," he said; "Skinny'll go as first mate. You'll go as ship's cook, Grove

will be a common seaman, and Pee-wee'll be a very common seaman. If the wind is fair and we don't have any squalls or blow-outs, I don't see why we shouldn't make the desert island of Steuben Junction by Tuesday or Wednesday."

"Oh boy!" I said, "that'll be *great.*"

Then he got kind of more serious and he said, "Now you kids listen to me. There may be a sequel to that affair, and then again there may not be. We're going on an automobile trip, the five of us. On the way back, I'll drop you off at Temple Camp, if you say, so you can join the rest of the bunch.

"We'll take the Adirondack tour up as far as Watertown and see if we can dig up Steuben Junction, and then we'll bang around in the woods. There's just about chance enough of our finding something, to make the trip interesting. But we're out for a good time, not for gold, just remember that. Then none of us will be disappointed. Understand, Pee-wee?"

Grove said, "Yes, but there were two bags of gold and when that fellow was discovered, he didn't have them. They must be somewhere."

"Unless he gave them to some poor family or

to a hospital or an Old Ladies' Home," Harry said, awful funny like, "and I don't just think he did. I don't believe he was that kind of a train robber. I think the dirt on his knife meant something. It proved *what*, but it didn't prove *where*. I think that when he found he couldn't do much more than crawl and was getting weaker and weaker, he may have dug a hole and buried his gold, so he wouldn't be caught with the goods. If he did, he buried some seeds, too. And that was twenty-five years ago. There may possibly be some sign now where there wasn't any then. Get me? If we should happen to see a big tall pine in a neighborhood where there aren't any other pines, why——"

"Oh boy, we'll buy a big cabin cruiser," Pee-wee yelled, "and we'll donate about ten thousand dollars to Temple Camp and——"

"We'll pay off the National Debt and start a line of airplane jitneys to the moon," Harry said. "Only first we've got to find the tree. And we're not going to hunt for it in somebody's backyard, either. All we know is, there are some woods up around a place called Steuben Junction; there may be miles of woods."

"What's a mile—that's nothing," Pee-wee

said. "I'll get a couple of spades from our gardener."

Harry said, "All right, I've been promising some of you an auto trip, and the sooner it's over the better. So now you'd better trot along and square matters with your scoutmaster and your folks. I don't want to be charged with kidnapping. I hope they won't let you go, but if they do, I'll see it through."

"Don't you worry," Pee-wee said, "I have my mother and father trained."

I guess we were all glad of one thing, anyway, and that was that vacation began the very next day. Some fellows don't bother much about school, but I never cut anything—not even vacation.

CHAPTER VIII

WE PLAN OUR ITINERARY
(I BET YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT THAT MEANS)

So that's just how it was that we went off on the Adirondack automobile tour with Harry Donnelle, in his big seven passenger Cadillac, and some of this story is going to be all about that trip. I bet you'll like it, because we pretty nearly got killed and had a lot of other adventures. The best part of it is where Pee-wee was dashed to pieces from a cliff; he says that's the principal thing in the story. Believe *me*, we had some fun that night.

We didn't tell the rest of the troop anything about those newspaper articles or about our going in what-do-you-call-it—quest of—buried treasure, because we knew they'd only laugh at us. If we found anything, that would be time enough to tell them, that's what Harry said.

Now maybe you don't know anything about the Adirondack tour, but anyway, it's all planned out

on a map for motorists. The way you go is up the Hudson to Albany and then you hit out west and go up through Utica to Syracuse. Then you go up north right close to Lake Ontario till you come to Watertown and then you go up along the St. Lawrence River till you get to Ogdensburg. There's a dandy big apple orchard near Ogdensburg.

After you leave Ogdensburg, you go east again and you come to a place named Malone. Then pretty soon you get to Lake Champlain—that's a peachy lake. It was invented by a man named Champlain—I mean discovered. Then you go across into Vermont—that's where the Green Mountains are, only they're blue. Then you go down through Vermont into New York and pretty soon you get to Albany again. I'm a regular Cook's Tours, hey? There's a place right near the station where you get four jawbreakers for a cent in Albany. Mostly you get only three. After that you go down the river until you get to Hudson and then you go over on the boat to Catskill.

And, oh boy, believe *me,* I know the way from there to Temple Camp. The best way is to go up through Bridge Street, because Warner's Drug

Store is on Bridge Street. He's a nice man, Mr. Warner is, he charges only ten cents for ice-cream sodas. Temple Camp isn't on the tour map, but the camp should worry.

The way you get to New York from Temple Camp is down through Kingston and Newburgh to Jersey City. But, gee whiz, I don't know why anybody should want to go to Jersey City. I know a fellow that comes from Jersey City—every time he gets a chance.

On the very day that we started on our trip, the rest of the troop went to Temple Camp to stay for a month, so it was pre-arranged (I thought up that word pre-arranged) that Harry would put us off there on the way back. He said he'd even do more than that—that he'd throw us off. But just the same, he likes Temple Camp, too.

So now to get the automobile started.

CHAPTER IX

WE HEAR ABOUT "EATS"

WHEN we cleared port (that's what Harry called it) we had the ship's papers secreted in one of the door pockets of the good brig *Cadillac*. Those papers were the two newspaper articles published in March, Eighteen Ninety-five, and the letter of the man who had been killed in the wreck, and the description of the poplar that we had copied out of a book. Pee-wee sat next to that pocket and kept his eye on it. Skinny sat between us and Grove sat in front with Harry.

Pretty soon I said to Harry, "There's one fellow I wish was on this trip, and that's Brent Gaylong."

Harry laughed, and then he said, "It would be right in his line."

"He was crazy for adventure," I said. "Do you remember how he told us about digging up a bottle full of gold paint?"

"Wonder what ever became of him and those kids?" Harry said.

It was while my patrol was on the long hike home from Temple Camp with Harry Donnelle last summer, that we met Brent Gaylong and the five little fellows that he called his patrol. They were on a hike to find a missing person. They belonged in Newburgh and they were awful poor. They were so poor that Brent named their patrol the Church Mice.

But one thing, that fellow was crazy for adventures and he had an awful funny way of telling things. Gee, he had us laughing a lot on the night that we all camped together. Pee-wee and Grove and Skinny had never met him, because they weren't with us on that trip—momentous trip.

"I'd like to see little Willie Wide-Awake again," Harry said.

I said, "It's too bad we didn't think of it in time; we might have gone through Newburgh."

"Too late now," Harry said.

Now I'm coming to the first adventure of that trip and it's mostly about Pee-wee, but it has something to do with being hungry, too. That's one thing Scouts like better than dinner and that's

supper. Especially Pee-wee is always hungry; Harry says he's a whole famine all by himself.

It was dark when we left Albany, because we had to stay there to get our radiator fixed, and while the machine was in the garage, we went to the movies. It was nice skimming along the road to Utica, and we could smell the country. Gee whiz, when that smell gets in the air, I always begin thinking about Temple Camp.

Pretty soon we came to a sign and Grove got out and read it by his flashlight. It said *"Welcome to Crystal Falls. Automobile laws enforced."*

"The pleasure is ours," I said.

"I wonder if there's any place in this berg where we can put up for the night?" Harry said. "Hanged if I know what's the matter, but we're running on five cylinders. That intake isn't working right, either."

"Believe *me,* my intake is all right," Pee-wee shouted, "only it hasn't got anything to take in."

"Always thinking about eats," I said.

"How about *you,* Alf?" Harry said to Skinny. "Hungry?"

Skinny said, "Yes, sir."

"Well then," Harry said, "we'll see if we can

run her under cover somewhere and get something to eat and a place to bunk in. I doubt if there's a garage in this thriving metropolis, but if there is, the mechanics are probably home in bed. This machine seems to have an acute attack of the pip. The gas isn't feeding right."

"You should worry, the rest of us will feed all right," I told him.

Ever since we left Albany the engine hadn't been running right and two or three times Harry had tried to get it running smooth, but he said he couldn't do anything in the dark. So now we turned into the main street of Crystal Falls and crept along very slow, the engine pounding all the while. There wasn't anybody to enforce the laws and there wasn't anybody to welcome us, either. The principal thing about the restaurants was that there weren't any. And the same with the hotels—they were very nice, only they weren't there.

"We should have kept out of that garage at Albany," Harry said; "go to a garage and then your troubles begin. The good ship *Cadillac* will have to be close-hauled, I'm afraid."

We stopped alongside the curb and Harry tried

to find out what was the matter. I guess there were a lot of things the matter. Anyway, we couldn't get started again. After about half an hour he gave it up and said he couldn't do anything until daylight.

"She's at the mercy of the wind and storm," he said; "I guess we'll have to take to the small boats. Do you see that light up the street, Pee-wee? Suppose you hike up there and see if there's anybody about, and if there is, find out where we can get something to eat and a place to sleep. Tell them we're wrecked on the treacherous rocks of Main Street."

"I'll find out," Pee-wee said; "don't you worry. I'll fix it."

He started along the street, going scout-pace, and we sat there in the machine for about ten minutes, waiting for him. Gee whiz, I think I was never so hungry in my life.

"I could eat a house," Grove said.

"I could eat a whole row of apartments," I told him.

"I could eat some bread and jam," little Skinny piped up.

"Good for you, Alf," Harry said; "if I met a piece of pie myself, I wouldn't be afraid to

face it. I guess Pee-wee'll scare up some information for us."

And believe *me,* he did! Pretty soon, back he came, panting all out of breath and trying to shout.

"*Hurrah, hurrah!*" he was calling.

"Did you find anything to eat?" Harry asked him.

"*Better than that! Better than that!*" he shouted, coming up to the car. "A scout is—is—a scout is a brother to every other scout. If he has food—and—he has to—he has to share it. There's a party of scouts up the woods road—they're having a big blowout—they've got liver—a man on horse—a man on horseback told me—I called to him—come on, let's find the woods road!"

"They've got what?" Harry asked him.

"*Liver!*" Pee-wee panted, "Don't you know what liver is? It—it—it always goes with bacon. Don't you know scouts always have liver and bacon when they're—they're camping?"

"Sounds good to *me,*" Harry said; "where is this sumptous liver and bacon blowout being held?"

"I told you," Pee-wee panted; "up the woods road."

"Mmm, mmm!" I said, "I'd just love to meet a slice of fried liver in the woods to-night."

Harry said, "Well, I guess we'll have to make a raid on our scout friends, that's all."

"We'll track them to their camp," Pee-wee said; "I'll show you how."

CHAPTER X

WE ATTEND A BLOWOUT

BELIEVE me, that was good news. Hotels are all right—I'm not saying anything against hotels—but when it comes to eats, oh boy, a scout blowout in the woods has got my kindest regards. And one thing about a scout camp is that anybody is welcome, especially scouts.

Harry said he guessed the car would be all right, because it was all wrong and no one could start it anyway. He said that just then he'd rather have some liver and bacon than the car. So we left it standing there and started back along the street, hunting for the woods road. We went a little way up a couple of different roads, but they both ran through open country. At last we hit into another road that went through woods. It was narrow and rocky and up-hill and the woods were so thick that the trees were all tangled over-head and it was awful quiet.

"Well, this is the right sort of a place for

scouts," Harry said; "they've got the right idea."

"Keep your eyes peeled in the woods for a camp-fire," Grove said.

"I'm getting hungrier every minute," Pee-wee shouted.

"Same here, only more so," I said.

Pretty soon one of us saw a light. It was pretty small and if it was a camp-fire, the camp must have been quite a way off.

"There it is! There it is!" Pee-wee piped up, "it's——"

"It's in the road, I think," Harry said.

In about a couple of minutes we heard voices and some one said, "Raise her a little more."

Then, good night, before we knew it, we were around a turn and walking plunk into a Ford car with a half a dozen fellows standing around, while one of them was blowing up a tire.

"Any scout camp around here?" Harry asked them.

"This is the only scout outfit I know of," one of them said; "we had a blowout."

For about a half a minute we just stood there and none of us spoke. Then Harry said very calm like, to Pee-wee:

"Is this the blowout that you had in mind?

Are you sure the man on horseback said *liver?"*

"He—he was going very fast," our young hero blurted out.

"I see," Harry said; "we are foiled again."

"Good night!" I just blurted out, "the man must have called *flivver!* Pee-wee, you're a scream."

All of a sudden some one said, "That you, Blakeley?"

I said, "Why are you——"

"Don't you remember Brent Gaylong?" he said.

CHAPTER XI

WE MEET AGAIN

THAT's always the way it is with our young hero, Scout Harris. He never hits what he aims at, but he always hits something. If he loses his way, he has an adventure. If he falls down, he finds a penny while he's on the ground. If he should be blown up by dynamite, he'd land in the ball-field and save his fifty cents admission. You can't beat him.

So now he began shouting, "Now you see, I brought you to the very fellows you were talking about. Do you mean to tell me that long lost friends aren't better than eats?"

All I could say was, "Pee-wee, you win."

Harry Donnelle couldn't say anything, he just sat down on a rock and laughed and laughed. "Brent," he said, "this is the Honorable Scout Harris, our young hero, who was leading us to a sumptuous repast in the solemn woods. But this is something better than we expected."

And you can bet it was! There was Brent Gaylong and little Willie Wide-Awake and the rest of the Church Mice—six of them altogether. Oh boy, it was good to see them.

As soon as we introduced Grove and Pee-wee and little Alf to them, Harry said, "And what in the dickens are you doing here, you old Calamity Jane? The last time we had the bad luck to run into you and your travelling kindergarten you were in hard luck—no scoutmaster, no friends,——"

"Oh, we're rolling in wealth now," Brent said; "I mean we're rolling in our flivver—latest model, self-stopper and everything. We don't speak to common scouts like you any more. We're on a trip—a series of trips—we left Newburgh this morning, and we've had four trips so far. I hope we don't get tripped again. Remember how we were out for adventure? Well, now we have it. If you want adventure, get a flivver."

"Where are you going?" Harry asked him.

"I haven't the slightest idea," he said. "Can't you see we're *not* going. The only kind of treatment we haven't given this machine is asperin. Anybody got an asperin tablet? We won this

machine for putting out a fire in Newburgh. We had it wished on us. I'm sorry we put the fire out—it was a nice fire."

I said, "Brent, you crazy Indian, you sound just the same as last year. You haven't changed a bit."

"I couldn't even change a dollar," he said.

"Well, this is some streak of luck anyway," Harry said. "We've got a 1920 Cadillac stalled down in the village. We're on our way to search for buried treasure—up near Lake Ontario. We think we've got a clew to a couple of bags of gold. Want to join us? At present, we're starving. You haven't got such a thing as a cheese sandwich loafing around, have you?"

"The last cheese sandwich I saw was on its way down little Bill's throat," he said, "but we have some cold corned beef, and crackers and rye bread, and a few other odds and ends that you're welcome to. What do you say we make a camp?"

So we all went into the woods and got a fire started just for old time's sake, and sprawled around it and had some eats. Believe *me,* it seemed good to be with those fellows again. Brent said that wherever we went, they would go too. He said they were on a vacation and they

didn't care what happened to them. He said that if he could only make one stab for buried treasure, he would feel that he hadn't lived in vain. That was always the way he talked—crazy like.

CHAPTER XII

WE GET THE CAR STARTED

We spent about an hour in the woods near the road, sitting around the fire and telling all about our adventures since the time we had seen each other before. Those fellows were on an auto trip, the same as we were, and they had a camping kit and everything. They were just starting to follow the Old Forge road north and wriggle around through the Adirondacks, that's what Brent said. But he said as long as we were going in search of treasure, they'd go with us. He said that treasure was his middle name.

Harry said, "Well, you seem to be something of a dabster with engines; suppose we all go back into the village and maybe you can get our old boat started. Then we'll hit the trail for the next berg and see if we can get a place to bunk until morning."

"We bunk in the woods," one of those little fellows sung out.

Harry said, "Yes, but you're good scouts; you came prepared to do that."

Brent said, "All right, pile in as many of you as want to."

"We'll walk with Harry Donnelle," little Willie-Wide-Awake shouted.

So that was the way we fixed it—Pee-wee and Grove and Skinny and I went ahead with Brent Gaylong in the Ford, and Brent's patrol followed along with Harry.

"Where is the old scow, anyway?" Brent called to Harry.

"Go right up the village street," Harry said, "and turn into a road branching off. You'll see it standing near a house; it's a new Cadillac—seven-passenger—nineteen twenty. We'll be there long before you get it started."

"You'll know it, because the headlights are the only two lights in the whole village," I said to Brent; "we ought to charge them for illuminating the town."

"The lights are dimmed," Pee-wee said.

"It isn't an old scow," Skinny piped up, in that funny way of his; "it's a new scow."

"Well, I'll bet a Canadian dime I get it started," Brent said. "Harry's all right on adventure and

he'd give you the coat off his back, but I think he's a punk mechanic."

"He understands engines!" little Skinny sang out. "Don't you say anything against him, because he understands everything; he sewed a button on for me."

"Bully for you, Alf," I said.

"Oh, I don't say he doesn't understand engines," Brent said; "but I think that engines don't understand *him*—they don't appreciate him."

"He understands *everything,*" Skinny shouted.

"Well, he understands how to get on the right side of scouts," Brent began laughing.

Pretty soon we got into the village and came to the place where the road branched off the main street.

"This the place where I turn?" Brent asked us.

"Yes," Pee-wee said.

"No—wait a minute," Grove spoke up.

"Go a little further," I said, "and you'll see a road—wait a minute—where are we?"

"This is a fine outfit of scouts," Brent said; "you'd get lost in a department store. Guess again."

"You turn in this road," Pee-wee shouted.

"No, you don't," Grove said; "wait a minute, yes, you do."

"Oh, goody, goody, goody!" I began shouting. "Everybody's wrong, as usual, except me—I mean I. There's the machine now; look between those two houses. A scout is observant."

In the dark we could see across a lawn between two houses, and there was the car, sure enough.

"Go up to the next road," I said, "and turn in."

"Anything you say," Brent laughed.

"For a minute I didn't know where I was at," Grove said.

He drove around into the road where the car was standing and right up to it and then got out. The flivver looked awful funny alongside it.

"Some Cadillac!" he said.

"Isn't it a peachy car?" Pee-wee asked him. "Isn't it a beaut? Look at those shock-absorbers. Feel the leather on those seats—boy, boy!" Gee whiz, you'd think the kid was trying to sell the car.

"Very snifty," Brent said.

"It's only four months old," Pee-wee said.

"Maybe that's the reason it hasn't learned to

walk yet," Brent told him. "Well, we'll take a squint."

Brent opened the hood while the rest of us piled into the car.

"You can't make it go," Skinny piped up; "if Harry couldn't, *you* can't."

"What do you bet?" Brent said.

"You can't," Skinny said.

I don't know what Brent did to the motor, but pretty soon he closed the hood, whistling to himself all the while, and got into the car. All of a sudden, br, br, br, br, br, she was purring away like an old cat.

"What do you say now?" he began laughing. Poor little Skinny didn't have anything to say.

"What did you do to it?" I asked.

"Just smiled at it," Brent said; "the scout smile always wins."

Believe me, we were all too surprised to speak.

"Any of you kids know how to run a Ford?" Brent asked us.

"Sure, Grove does," we said. Because they have a flivver at Grove's house.

"I haven't got any license," Grove said.

"All right, hop in there and follow us," Brent

told him; "we'll move along and meet them and save them a walk."

So we swung into the woods road, with Grove coming along behind us in the flivver, and just as we reached the place where the woods began, we met Harry and Brent's patrol, hiking along.

"All right, hop in," Brent said.

"Well—I'll—be—jiggered," Harry began.

"Hop in," Brent said, "and don't stand there talking, if you want a place to sleep to-night. You couldn't even run a carpet-sweeper."

"You're a wonder, old man," Harry said; "what was the matter with her? I tried everything."

"Did you say *please?*" Brent asked him.

"No, but I said about everything else," Harry said.

"Do you want to run that Ford or shall I?" Brent asked him.

"Stay where you are," Harry said. "I'll run the Ford. Go ahead, we'll follow."

Some of the kids piled into the small car and the rest of them came in with us. We were all separated together.

"This treasure-hunt is developing into a pa-

rade," Brent said. "Look behind, will you? He can't even get the flivver started."

But pretty soon we saw them coming along, quite a distance behind us.

I looked at the clock alongside the speedometer and saw that it was nearly two o'clock in the morning. "Time flies," I said.

Grove said, "Sure, it should be arrested for speeding."

CHAPTER XIII

WE ARE IMPLICATED

I GUESS we had been going about fifteen minutes when Brent said, "Let's see those papers you were telling us about."

Pee-wee felt in the side pocket and then in the opposite side pocket and then began shouting, "They're not here! They're not here! The papers are stolen!"

"Good night," I said, "the plot grows thicker."

"Maybe Harry has them in his pocket," Grove said.

We looked behind, but the Ford wasn't in sight.

"The papers are stolen! The papers are stolen!" Pee-wee kept shouting, "There's a plot! Hurry up, drive faster! I bet it was that soda clerk in Bennett's."

"The papers aren't so necessary," Grove said.

"Sure they're necessary," Pee-wee screamed; "that letter reveals the secret. Drive faster!"

Brent didn't drive any faster, he just laughed; and all the while the rest of us were rooting around, trying to find the papers.

"Look under the seat," Grove said.

We got up from the back seat and lifted it and Pee-wee poked his head around underneath and groped with his hands.

"Is he there?" Brent asked him.

"Who?" Pee-wee hollered.

"The soda clerk from Bennett's," Brent said.

"No, but the mystery grows deeper," Pee-wee shouted. "Give me the flashlight—quick. There's some buried treasure here! Look! Here are some spoons. Here's a silver thing like they have hot chocolate in! He put them here—look! I knew he was a villain!"

Grove and I, who were in the back part of the machine, looked into the space under the seat, and *good night,* as sure as anything, there was a silver bowl and some spoons in a box all lined with plush. The flashlight made them all bright. Just as I was looking, Pee-wee opened a big plush box and there was a gold watch and a dandy long pearl necklace and a lot of other things.

"Now, what have you got to say?" he shouted in my face.

Brent looked around, kind of laughing, but he didn't bother to stop the car. I guess he was too anxious to get to Utica.

"What do you think it means?" Pee-wee said, in a kind of whisper. "We'd better wait for them to catch up, hey?"

"Wait nothing," Brent said, all the while laughing.

I said, "I think it means that Harry's people were bringing the stuff home in the car from somewhere, maybe, and forgot to take it out; that's what I think. If the rest of them are as careless and happy-go-lucky as he is, that's probably what happened."

"He *isn't* careless and happy-go-lucky," Skinny piped up. He was half asleep under the big buffalo robe, and his voice sounded awful funny, as if he were talking in his sleep.

"Maybe Harry stole them," I said.

Good night, off went the buffalo robe and Skinny sat up like a jack-in-the-box. "He *didn't!*" he shouted.

I guess we were all too tired and sleepy to think much about those things that Pee-wee had discovered. Pretty soon our young hero was sprawling on the floor of the car, dead to the

world and Skinny was sound asleep on the front seat under the buffalo robe. Grove and I stayed awake, but we didn't talk much.

It was nearly four o'clock in the morning when we got to Utica and we stopped at a hotel where there were sheds for automobiles. Oh, boy, weren't we some sleepy bunch! Brent ran the car under one of the sheds and then we all staggered into the hotel. While we were waiting for our rooms, along came the Ford with Harry and Brent's patrol. They could hardly stand up, they were so sleepy.

He was an awful nice fellow, that hotel man was. He said he didn't know where he could put eleven people, but he guessed as long as we were scouts, we wouldn't mind bunking up. So he gave us three rooms and I had Pee-wee and Skinny wished onto me.

The clerk said, "When would you like to be called?"

"Calling won't do any good," Harry said; "you'll have to scream. I think we'll wake up about ten o'clock to-morrow morning."

"It's to-morrow morning already," I told him; "everything is all mixed up; we'll have to have lunch for breakfast; we should worry."

But anyway, I woke up earlier than I thought I would—that was about nine o'clock. Pee-wee woke up while I was getting dressed, and we decided that we'd go out and take a little walk around the city. We went out very quiet, so as not to disturb Skinny.

I guess none of the rest of the fellows were up; anyway, we didn't see anything of them. We went up the street and stopped in a candy store and got a couple of sodas. I took raspberry, because it's red—that's my patrol color. While we were drinking them, Pee-wee said:

"Did you ask Harry about those things?"

I said, "I did not; we were all too sleepy. You should worry about those things."

When we were finished we took a walk around the town, just for fun, looking in windows. I guess it was about half-past ten when we started back. When we had almost got to the hotel we heard a boy calling, *"Extree! Extree! Big robbery! Extree!"*

So we bought one, and the first thing we saw was an article with a big heading that said *DARING BURGLARY* and underneath it said *HOME OF JUDGE WEST ENTERED. TWO MISCREANTS HELD.*

This is just what the article said, because we kept that paper:

The summer home of Justice Willard E. West in Crystal Falls was entered some time between one and two o'clock this morning by means of a kitchen window, which had been forced open.

Property consisting of jewelry and silverware to the amount of about two thousand dollars was taken.

It was not until the burglars were leaving the house that Judge West's young daughter, hearing a sound on the lower floor, aroused her parents, who immediately investigated and found that a cabinet in their daughter's room had been rifled as well as the sideboard in the dining-room, from which several articles of value had been taken.

The judge immediately 'phoned to the village authorities, and as a result of their prompt action, two men who were lurking near the railroad station were arrested.

One of them had in his possession a wallet containing about fifty dollars in bills, which

the judge identified as belonging to him. Constable Berry of Crystal Falls, believes that there was a third man implicated in the job, because none of the missing property, except the wallet and a few small articles of silverware, were found upon the two men under arrest. It is supposed that they were frightened away before their work was completed, but a search of the premises both inside and out, failed to reveal a large silver punch bowl, which is missing and the jewelry case of Elsa, the judge's young daughter. This, it was stated, contained a necklace of pearls valued at nearly a thousand dollars.

An incentive to the capture of the third man is offered by Judge West, in a reward of five hundred dollars, for the return of this precious keepsake.

I just stared at Pee-wee, and he stared at me.

"G-o-o-d night!" I said, "the plot grows thicker."

"Those are the very things," he said; "it's a mystery."

"It looks as if we were the third man," I told him.

"Who?" he wanted to know.

"The eleven of us," I said.

"How do you explain it?" he asked me, all excited.

"I don't explain it," I said; "but I know one thing, and that is, I'm going to get back and tell Harry as soon as I can, before the whole crew of us are arrested. Harry's going to have a mechanic look the car over this morning. Suppose that mechanic should——"

That was enough for Pee-wee; he started up the street scout-pace, and I quess he must have been pretty excited, because he passed right by an old empty sardine box and didn't even bother to pick it up.

CHAPTER XIV

WE ARE CRIMINALS

When I got to the hotel sheds, there was Pee-wee standing all out of breath, and Harry and all the rest of them standing around, gaping. Brent was laughing so hard he couldn't speak, and Harry was saying, "*Some* scout! *Some* bull-head!"

"What's the matter?" I said.

"Look in—look in—look in—side—it!" Pee-wee panted, "the back—seat."

"It isn't my car at all," Harry said, "it's got a New York license. If it hadn't been for that old tin can of yours stopping every ten feet last night I could have got a squint at the tail-light. Smiled at it, huh? You smiled at the wrong car. You started somebody else's motor."

"It's a nineteen-twenty touring Cadillac," Brent said, laughing all the while; "Pee-wee was the first to get in it. He showed me the nice leather seats and the shock-absorbers."

"We'll *need* some shock-absorbers before the day's out, I'm thinking," Harry said; "this is some swell scout outfit—not! Got into the wrong car! Look up the street and see if you see the sheriff coming. Pee-wee, don't ever mention the name of scout to me again. *'A scout is observant!'* Excuse me, while I smile."

"Well," Brent said, all the while trying not to laugh, "we're out for adventure; we have to take what comes."

"We don't have to take other people's machines," Harry said. He wasn't mad, because he always sees the funny side of things himself, and he was laughing, too, but I guess all of us felt pretty cheap, because a scout—well, *you* know——

"I never thought I'd live to see the day when a party of Boy Scouts would steal an auto," he said. "Well, I don't suppose there's anything to do, but sit around and wait for the owner to come and have us arrested. I wonder if they have a nice comfortable jail here, with modern improvements. I hate a jail without electric lights."

Brent said in that funny way of his, "I rather like the way things are turning out. I've never been in jail. I've often promised little Bill here,

that some day we'd go to jail, and now we're going to have our wish. I've read about prisoners escaping from jail—ladders, files, and all that sort of stuff. Now's our chance. We'll drug a keeper. Ever drug a keeper, Harry? I'd a great deal rather escape from a jail than find buried treasure. That's a real adventure; regular Monte Cristo stuff."

"I kinder think I'd like that, too," Harry said; "I never thought of it before."

"This is just the right kind of a trip," Brent said, "we don't have to run after the adventures; they come after *us*."

"Oh, they'll come after *us* all right," Harry said.

"Will we have to go to prison for twenty years?" poor little Skinny piped up.

"People who make mistakes like that ought to go up for life," Harry said; "and then some."

"Lis—lis—lis—lis—'en!" Pee-wee began shouting, all the while waving the newspaper in the air. He was just getting his breath, but nobody paid any attention to him. Harry and Brent sat there on a bench, side by side, and it was awful funny to see them—they just kept us laughing.

"Look—look—under the seat!" Pee-wee was trying to say.

"And the tell-tale papers are gone," Harry said. *"Curses! Curses!"*

"My idea," Brent said, "would be to escape into a boat from one of the jail windows. I hope the jail is near a river, but I don't suppose we can have everything. It ought to be on a dark night. This is going to be great."

"We should have kidnapped a maiden," Harry said; "there ought to be a maiden in it. If there had only been a gold-haired maiden in the machine——"

"Shut up! You're crazy!" Pee-wee yelled. "The plot is thicker—it's terribly thick. There *is* a maiden—listen—shut up—listen, will you—there is a—*a maiden!"*

"Is she under the back seat?" Brent wanted to know.

"Open the back seat and let her out, poor girl," Harry said.

"How about ransom?" Brent said.

"Read this paper!" at last Pee-wee managed to shout. *"Will you keep still and read this paper?* The plot is thicker than you think it is."

"It must be about solid," Harry said.

"Read this paper before you look under the seat," Pee-wee yelled.

"Speak not to me, P. Harris," Harry said; "you're the cause of my downfall. I was an honest young man until I met *you*."

"You make me tired!" Pee-wee fairly screamed.

Just then somebody, gee whiz, I don't know who, because everyone was laughing so, but anyway, somebody started to lift the back seat of the Cadillac when Pee-wee tumbled pell-mell into the car and pushed him out and sat plunk in the middle of the seat himself.

"There's going to be—a—a—what-d'ye-call-it—a revolution!" he said.

"I'll join it," Brent said.

"Put me down," Harry told him, "the more adventures the better. I like revolutions."

"I mean a *revelation*," Pee-wee yelled; "you just read that paper!"

Laugh! Gee whiz, I don't know whether anyone there remembered about those things under the seat. Maybe Grove thought he had dreamed it. As for Skinny, he had been too far gone under the buffalo robe to think twice about it, I guess. I just watched Harry and Brent, while Harry read the articles out loud, with all the fellows crowding

around him, to get a squint at it. And all the while, Pee-wee sat straight up on the middle of that back seat like a king on his throne. He was holding the seat down against all comers. He looked like a young hero.

"A burglary, hey?" Harry said, awful funny. "Let's see; jewelry and silverware and a punch bowl. Fine. And Elsa West. Brent, you didn't steal Elsa's necklace, did you, without me knowing anything about it? I would have been glad to help you. I make a specialty of necklaces. Well, P. Harris, I've read the article. Tell us the worst."

"You said a scout was not observant," Pee-wee said, very solemn like. "You said it sarcastic, sort of. It was an insinuation. You said never to mention scouts to you again—didn't you? You said I was a something-or-other."

"You are," Harry said; "deny it, if you can."

"Who's responsible for bringing this machine here? You said *I* was. *I have won five hundred dollars!* I saved—saved that what's-her-name's necklace for her. A scout is helpful—it says so. She has to thank the Boy Scouts if her necklace is safe. Those burglars are *foiled!* Maybe you think you can get the best of the Boy Scouts. Let

those people hunt around all they want—inside and outside—they won't find that punch bowl. Do you know why? *Because all those things are safe in the hands of the 1st Bridgeboro Troop, Boy Scouts of America.* That's why. Look! *Here's* the box of jewelry. *Here's* the necklace. *Here's* the silverware. It's *saved,* because I started Brent Gaylong off in this automobile. A scout is—a scout is—*efficient*—so *now!*"

What did I tell you about Pee-wee? No matter what he does, he always lands right side up. He makes a mistake and turns out a hero.

You can't beat him.

CHAPTER XV

WE MEET SHERLOCK HOLMES

HARRY said, "Well, I guess it's back to Crystal Falls for us. I hope we'll find my car there. I don't want to set a bad example to the Boy Scouts, but you see what a good turn one can do stealing an automobile. I hope you boys will always remember that."

Brent said in that funny way of his, "I'll never say another word against stealing; Pee-wee has taught me a lesson."

"Do you think the burglars were in one of those houses when we started away in the car?"

"I think they were inside the house for a sceond haul when we rode away in their machine," Brent said. "Make a good movie play, wouldn't it?"

"Will we go to jail now?" poor little Skinny piped up.

"We're heroes!" Pee-wee shouted.

"Well, go ahead back," Brent said; "I think,

considering the high cost of gasoline that we'll roll on and find a good place to camp in—where is it? The woods north of Watertown?"

"If we don't overtake you before you get to Syracuse," Harry said, "bang up north and wait for us at Kenny's Hotel in Watertown."

Brent said, "Now look here. You don't know how long you'll be in Crystal Falls. By all the rules of the game, Pee-wee will marry the gold-haired judge's daughter—— I mean the judge's gold-haired daughter—and it'll be a week before we can join forces. So this is what we're going to do; we're going to motor on to what's that place—Steuben Junction. We've got a full camping outfit in our little old flivver and by the time you get there, we'll have a nice little camp in the woods all ready for you. Now I'll tell you what you do. If you don't overtake us, before we get to Steuben Junction, go to the railroad station or the drug store——"

"I'd rather go to the drug store," Pee-wee yelled.

"And ask where the Newburgh scouts have their camp. You'll find us."

So that was the way we fixed it, and after Brent and his patrol had started, the rest of us piled into

the Cadillac and "turned our prow" (that's what Harry said) for Crystal Falls.

"I'm going to be the one to return the stuff," Pee-wee said.

"You going to make a speech?" Harry asked him.

All the while I was wondering who the auto belonged to. It had a New York license and I didn't believe it belonged to the burglars.

Poor little Skinny said, "Will we get arrested now?"

Harry said, "No, we're all going to be heroes now. We're in the hands of P. Harris."

"We foiled them," Pee-wee said.

"That's what we did," Harry said. "I guess there wasn't any third man. I wonder what those crooks thought when they came out with some more stuff and saw that the machine was gone."

"I bet they were peeved," I said.

"I bet they had unkind thoughts," Grove said.

"I bet they swore, but it didn't do them any good," Pee-wee shouted, "they were—what-d'ye-call-it—checkmated."

"You have no right to say that," Harry said, "there is no reason why a burglar should not be

a gentleman. Naturally they were annoyed; any one would be, under the same circumstances."

When we got to Crystal Falls, Harry ran the car through the street where he had left his own car, and there it was just as we had left it, and there were a lot of people standing around, looking at it. I guess maybe they thought it belonged to the burglars, hey?

Harry said, "Anybody here in authority?"

A man opened his coat and showed us a big steel badge, "I'm constabule," he said.

Harry said, "Well, Mr. Constbule, that car belongs to me. It's stalled. Here's my license card; just compare it with the plate. All right? I wish you'd see that nobody fools with it until we get back; Judge West lives just around the corner, doesn't he?"

"What cher want to see the jedge about?" the constable asked us.

Harry said, "Well, we're boy scouts and we had an idea that we might be able to find his property."

"Had an idee, huh?" the man said, kind of, you know, sarcastic like. "Well now, don't you put sech crack brained notions into the heads o' these kids."

"No?" Harry said, awful funny.

"'Cause this here ain't no case for boy scouts," the constable said.

Harry said, "No, really?"

It was awful funny to see them. The constable was standing right outside the car with a lot of people around him, and Harry was sitting in the driver's place, with his hands on the wheel, looking down at that bunch.

"How does it come you own two cars?" the constable said, very shrewd like.

"Is that a riddle?" Harry said.

"Where'd you come from?" the man asked.

"Well, we came from Utica," Harry said. "we happened to read about the robbery in the papers there—five hundred bucks reward, you know. We couldn't resist that."

"City fellers, ain't yer?" the constable said.

"Right the first time," Harry said; "you're a regular Sherlock Holmes; how did you ever find it out?"

The man said, "Well, I ain't got no use fer these here amatoor detectives. And I ain't got no use fer filling youngsters' heads up with a lot of truck about doin' sleuth work, neither. 'Cause all that's a part uv dime novels. Clews

and sech things is for the *po*-lice. Them stolen goods is in some pawnshop or maybe buried, and as soon as them two swabs is ready to give us the tip, I'm ready to talk business with 'em—that's me."

"What could be nicer?" Harry said.

"They'll weaken," the man said.

"Did you ask them *please?*" Harry wanted to know.

"If you're sot on going around to the jedge's," the main said, "I'll go round with yer. But don't you bother your heads about *of*-ficial business. We got those chaps and we'll get the booty; I got two clews I'm workin' on now." Just then he climbed in and sat down between Grove and I on the back seat. "And I'll tell you this," he said, "that stolen property's miles and miles away from here."

"You're sitting on it," Harry said, very calm and sober.

"Settin' on what?" the constable said.

"On my cap," Harry said; "would you mind handing it to me?"

Gee whiz, I could hardly keep a straight face. Grove had to look out of the car, he was laughing so hard. I was afraid Skinny'd blurt some-

thing out, but he didn't. I guess he thought we were all being arrested.

"Sometimes a feller sets right down on a thing and never knows it," the constable said.

"Very true," Harry said. "I know a man who sat on a committee and never knew it. Judge lives just around the corner, you say?"

The constable said, "Yes, but I tell you now, he won't be able to give you no clews. He's a good jedge, but when it comes to solving a case, he can't see very deep."

"Sometimes you don't have to see very *deep*," Harry said—"just a few inches or so. Are you comfortable back there, Constable? So you think the Boy Scouts are not much good at this kind of thing, hey? Think it wouldn't be worth while under the—under——"

"Shh!" I said. I just couldn't help it.

"Under the circumstances, it wouldn't be no use at all," the constable said, very important, "because we've got the case in hand, and we know how to handle these things. My cal'calation is, that them things is in pawn in Noo York, or maybe Albany. But then, again, they may be under——"

"Exactly so," Harry said; "they may be under——"

"Underground," the constable said. "They may be buried in the woods down near the station. I'm goin' ter hev a search made there tomorrer. Leastways, me and my depyties ain't goin' ter be fooled. We ain't sayin' nuthin', but we had a rough little tussle with them two swabs down ter the station, and we landed on top, by gum! And we'll land on top in *re*-gards to this here stolen vallybles—by gum!"

"Bully for you, and a couple of hips for Crystal Falls," Harry said; "you may be on top already. Who knows. You're not telling all you know."

"That's what I ain't," the constable said. "Well, here we are at the jedge's."

CHAPTER XVI

WE ASTONISH MR. HOLMES

HARRY said, "So this is the judge's house, hey? Nice house—windows n'everything. Well, Constable, I hope you'll get that five hunndred reward. Funny thing about the Boy Scouts, they don't care anything for money. Can't seem to drum the idea out of their heads. But when it comes to foiling burglars and all that sort of thing, why that's their favorite outdoor sport. And stolen property, they just eat it alive! Let me see if I can't root out some truck from under that seat; sorry to disturb you."

We all climbed out and the constable said, "They ought ter hev sech crazy notions drummed out uv their heads. *Hello!* What's that?"

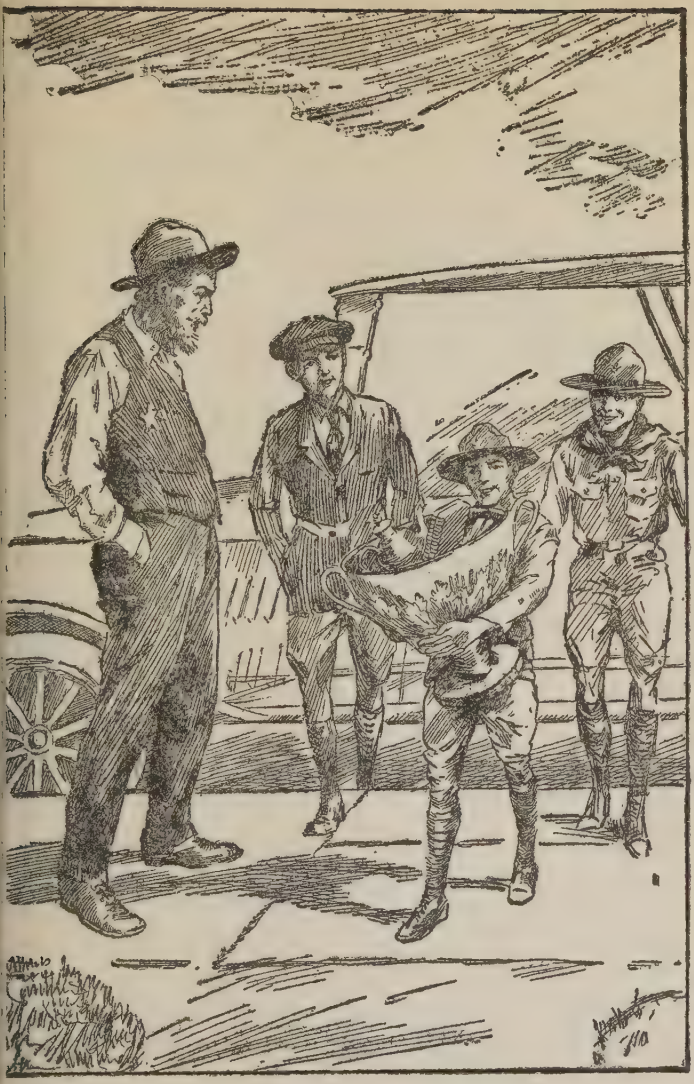
Harry said, "This? Oh, it's just a punch bowl; hold it a second, will you Roy? Don't drop it. Here, Grove, take this jewelry box; look out for it, it's got a pearl necklace inside. Take these silver spoons, too. The sun's getting hot, Con-

stable; it's going to be warm this afternoon. Here, somebody take this silver teapot. Cup of tea wouldn't go half bad now, would it?"

Jimin-*etty!* You should have seen that constable—you just ought to have seen him. He just stood there gaping, while Harry handed the things out. "So you see you were on top after all; hey Constable?" he said. "And a man may sit down on something and never know it. Let Pee-wee take those things—he's the doctor. The rest of us will follow. Come along up, Constable, we're going to make Mrs. West give us each a cup of iced tea for a reward."

Honest, I couldn't tell you which was funnier to look at, Pee-wee or that constable. Harry didn't smile at all. There stood the kid, holding the big silver punch bowl in his two arms, and the silver teapot and the spoons and things, and the plush jewelry box piled inside it. I never saw him look so small as he did with that big load.

And the constable—*g-o-o-d night!* There he stood, gaping at Pee-wee, while the rest of us began laughing, all except Harry. He acted just as if nothing had happened at all. "Now, if there's anything else missing in town," he said, "just let us know, and we'll get it. Speak while we're here,



I NEVER SAW HIM LOOK SO SMALL AS HE DID WITH THAT BIG LOAD.

because in about fifteen minutes we're off for buried treasure. You see we used to make a specialty of German spies, but now there aren't any; things are dull since the war. Any little job-lot of mysteries you want unravelled? No? Oh, very well. We make a specialty of murders and kidnappings and Bolsheviki plots; we like Bolsheviki plots best of all. But we're not proud. We're always willing to take a little burglary case to accommodate some one. All right, Pee-wee, forward march—up the steps—and lookout you don't slip! Won't you join us, Constable? The more the merrier."

CHAPTER XVII

WE LET OUR YOUNG HERO DO THE TALKING

GEE WHIZ, I had to laugh; there stood Pee-wee with his arms around the big bowl and the other things piled inside it, away up to his neck. He looked awful funny.

"You leave it to me," he said; "I know how to talk to a judge, because my father knows a man whose brother was a judge."

"Trust us," Harry told him; "we won't say a word."

"You have to handle judges a special way," our young hero said.

Pretty soon the door opened, and there stood a girl about—oh, I don't know, I guess she was about sixteen.

"Here's your stuff," Pee-wee said; "we brought it back to you." And he marched into the house with the rest of us after him. "Where shall I put it down?" he asked her.

Even the girl couldn't help laughing, the kid looked so funny. Then she began wringing her hands, kind of happy like (you know the way they do), and shouted, *"Mother! Oh, Mother! Come down! Everything is here, they've brought it back!"*

Her mother came downstairs all excited, and I guess she must have thought it was kind of funny, too, to see us all standing around, and the punch bowl, with everything piled inside it, on a table, and Pee-wee standing right beside it like a guard.

She said, "Oh, Constable! How *did* you do it? How can we *ever* thank you? You don't mean that these boys—stole——"

"I don't know nuthin' 'bout it, Miss West," he said; "it seems these here youngsters *re*-covered it. I don't know what sort of clew they worked on. Looks as if they was pretty clever, I got to admit. Looks like some *p-u-r-t-y* shrewd *de*-tective work, I got to allow."

Then Harry spoke up and said, "Mrs. West and Miss West, it is the privilege of the Boy Scouts to restore your valuable property which was stolen. Doubtless you have heard of the Miracle Man; allow me to introduce him, Mr. Walter Harris, known far and wide as Pee-wee

the Sleuth. Tell them, Walter, of how we got on the trail of this treasure, of the clews we followed, and of how you ferreted out the secret of where the valuables lay hidden. It is really a wonderful story, Mrs. West."

"Oh *do* tell us," the girl began crying; "I know you're just wonderful—Mr. Harris."

All the while, Pee-wee was shifting from one foot to another and scowling at Harry, and looking uncomfortable.

"Scouts seldom go wrong, Miss West," Harry said to the girl; "even in the darkness of night, they cannot be foiled. Their senses are so highly developed, and they are so alert, that missing a train, for instance, or getting onto the wrong train, are things unknown to them. A scout is unerring. He can even identify a tree among thousands of other trees, in the dense forest——"

"Isn't that perfectly *wonderful!*" Elsa West said.

All the while, Pee-wee was wriggling his neck in his collar and shifting from one foot to another and trying to catch Harry's eye.

"The manner in which these young scouts were able to recover your valuables, Mrs. West," Harry went on, very sober in that funny way of

his, "is truly remarkable. I was not with them when they discovered the first clew—I think it was a shock absorber; was it not, Walter? But I am glad that I can share in the honor which is his —and theirs. The Boy Scouts are nothing less than wonderful, Mrs. West. Their great accuracy of vision—— But I will let the Miracle Man tell you in his own words. Come Pee-wee."

I think Pee-wee would have killed Harry Donnelle if he had had him alone. He just stood there, scowling and shifting, and then he began.

He said, "Well, I'll tell you how it is about the Boy Scouts. They make some dandy mistakes. Other fellers don't make such good mistakes—see? You have to admit that there are good mistakes, don't you?"

"Oh, positively," Harry said.

Mrs. West whispered to her daughter, "Isn't he too cute?"

"Some of the worst things that ever happened are good, aren't they?" the kid went on. I could hardly keep a straight face. "Suppose a house burns down. That isn't good is it?"

"We follow you," Harry said.

"But if somebody gets rescued, that's good."

"Oh, it's splendid," Elsa West said.

"Even if you get into the wrong automobile it might be good," our young hero said. "Maybe, kind of, there might be times when the wrong thing is better than the right one. That doesn't stop anybody from being a hero, does it?"

Harry said, "Not at all."

"Well then," Pee-wee said, "do you know Shakespeare?"

"I never met him," Harry said.

"Don't you know he's dead?" the kid shouted.

"I didn't even know he was sick," Harry came back.

"He was smarter than you are," the kid hollered at him, "and he said, '*All's well that ends well,*' because it's in my copy book. That means it's good to make a mistake, if you can do a good turn. See? What's the difference between two Cadillacs? Even suppose we got into the wrong one and drove away and then found——"

By now everybody there was laughing and Mrs. West kept whispering to her daughter that Pee-wee was "excruciating" and "just too cute." I guess they were beginning to see how it was.

"There's your valuable stuff," the kid said; "that's the main thing, isn't it?"

Mrs. West was awful nice. She said, "*Indeed* it's the main thing, and how can we ever thank you? But tell us all about how it happened. I don't care anything about mistakes or accidents. You've brought us back our things—and it's wonderful."

"That's just what I said," Pee-wee told her; "you should worry about how we did it. Didn't we prevent the burglars from going away with those things? Sure we did. Because we went away in their car. See?"

Then Harry said, smiling in that nice way he has; he said, "It was just one of those happy little errors that only scouts know how to commit, Mrs. West." Then he told her just how it was, and she said it was, you know, some kind of a word—*providential.* That means lucky.

"Oh, and father will give you five hundred dollars just as he said," Elsa West spoke up, "and you deserve it."

"We foiled them," Pee-wee said.

"Indeed you foiled them," Mrs. West told him, smiling all the while; "and you're going to stay and have some refreshments and wait for the judge to come home. He'll be *so* glad to see you, and he'll give you a check, just as he said."

"How about that, Pee-wee?" Harry said. "We shouldn't want to make any more mistakes, eh?"

Gee whiz, I knew that Scout Harris wouldn't make any mistake about that, anyway. Trust him for that.

"That's one thing about scouts that you don't know about," he said, "because anyway, they can't do that on account of a rule. They can't take a reward for—of course, I don't mean they can't—— Now, if somebody happened to give a scout a—say a piece of pie—that would be all right. If it's just kind of—you know—something to eat—but I mean money."

Mrs. West said, "You shall have a whole pie all to yourself. I'm glad that there is no rule against that, at least. While you're eating it, you can tell us all about the scouts, because I'm *very* interested."

"So am I," said Elsa; "so you must all come in the dining-room this instant so we can serve you all, and if you're *real* scouts, you can prove it by showing us that you have appetites, and Mr. Harris can give us a lecture."

Oh, boy! Believe *me,* Mr. Harris gave them more than a lecture. He gave them a demonstration.

CHAPTER XVIII

WE ARE IN SUSPENSE

CRACKY, that's one thing I'm crazy about—lemon meringue pie. *Mm—mm!* There's only one thing I like better than a piece of lemon meringue pie, and that's two pieces. My mother says you shouldn't eat the crust, but she doesn't know the rule about a scout being thorough. Always leave your camp site clean. It's the same with your plate.

Most of the time we were at that house, Harry Donnelle was talking with Elsa West. Gee whiz, I bet she liked him a lot, hey? He told her he couldn't play the victrola, because he had never taken any victrola lessons; that fellow's crazy.

Anyway, they were sorry when we started off, and Elsa said she hoped we'd find the buried gold. She said that was one thing she'd like to be—a boy. Gee whiz, I couldn't blame her, because anyway, we have a lot of fun. She said she wasn't afraid of rain.

We left the auto there in charge of the constable, and he said he'd call up the Department of Motor Vehicles and find out who had the license number that was on that car. Because one thing sure, it didn't belong to those thieves. Harry said we should worry about it and that we might as well let that constable do something to earn his salary. I guess it took him the rest of that day to get over his shock. I guess he thought we were crazy when he saw we wouldn't take the reward, but that's the way it is with us. But, of course, we don't count eats. You can give us all the eats you want to.

Harry said, "Well, as long as we've been mixed up with burglars, let's take our machine to a garage and get up against some *real* robbers. They'll probably tell me I need everything renewed except the smell. Come ahead."

We had to get somebody to tow us to the nearest robbers' den and then we found that Harry's machine needed a "complete overhauling." That's what they always tell you. But anyway, they didn't get away with it, and in about an hour we were rolling along the road for Utica.

"Do you know what I'd like to do to you?" Pee-wee shouted at Harry.

"No, break it to me gently," Harry said.

"I'd like to hit you a good rap on the—— Why didn't you let me do the talking from the start?"

"If you hit me and I should ever find it out——" Harry said.

"You don't know how to talk to a judge's family," Pee-wee said; "you have to use logic. Do you know what that is?"

"No, what's that?" Harry asked him.

"It's where you prove a thing by showing how one thing matches with another—kind of," the kid said.

"Well, suppose you get in the wrong automobile; is that logic?" Harry asked him.

"If there's stolen goods in it, yes," the kid shouted.

"All right," Harry said, "here's another. What's the difference between a shock-absorber?"

"You make me tired," Pee-wee yelled.

"What's the difference between a pirate and a garage keeper?"

"None!" we all yelled.

It was about five o'clock in the afternoon when we got back to Utica. It looked just the same as

before; all the buildings were there and everything. Harry said it hadn't changed a bit.

Now if we had followed the road from Utica to Syracuse, we wouldn't have had the adventure that I'm going to tell you about. I bet you're glad we took another road, hey? Anyway, this is how it happened. In the restaurant where we stopped to get some eats in Utica, we met some moving picture men with a camera. Gee, that's the way it is with Harry Donnelle—he gets acquainted with everybody.

Those men said that they had just come from a place named Lurin, where there were a lot of cliffs and things. They said they had been making part of a photo-play up there. I bet they have a lot of fun, those men. They told us that if we didn't mind a couple of steep hills, that would be the shortest way to get to Watertown, because it cut off a corner.

One thing about Harry Donnelle, he always wants to do things different from the regular way. Believe me, if you're in an auto the best way is always to follow the state road. But Harry said that if we hit into the road north through Alder Creek and Boonville, we'd be able to get to Watertown that night.

"I bet it's a rocky road to Dublin," Grove said.

"Will we fall off the cliffs?" poor little Skinny piped up.

"Not afraid are you, Alf?" Harry said, nice and pleasant like.

I didn't say anything, because we had no camping outfit and it costs a lot of money at hotels, and if we could cut out Syracuse and get to Watertown that night, I saw it would be a good thing. Only we didn't know anything about the road.

Harry said, "Well, the only way we can know is to find out." That was just like him. If you tell him a thing is risky, he wants to do it right away.

So about six o'clock we turned into the road going north, that isn't marked on the tour map. The first thing we did was to get onto the wrong road and bunk our noses into Rome.

I said, "If we meet Julius Caesar, we'll ask which is the road for Watertown." There was a dandy ice-cream store in Rome, so Harry said we might as well do as the Romans do, and have some ice cream. Rome didn't look very ancient, but good night, the road out of it was ancient enough.

We went back to Deerfield and hit the road north, and the next thing we ran plunk into Old Forge.

"Everything around here is out of date," Harry said; "Ancient Rome and Old Forge. I long for *New* York."

By that time it was dark. We followed the road south again to Alder Creek, and then hit into the other road north, and went through Boonville, so then we knew we were all right. Anyway, we were on the right road, only the road was all wrong. Believe me, that cow-path had some nerve calling itself a road. After about an hour we passed Lurin and then, good night, some hill! Up, up, up, up, till pretty soon we could look down off to the east and see little bits of lights; I guess it was a village.

Anyway, the road ran right along the edge of a steep precipice with only a kind of a rough fence between. Pretty soon, Harry stopped the car. Skinny was fast asleep.

"Looks pretty bad ahead there, doesn't it?" Harry said to the rest of us.

By the glare of the headlights I could see that for quite a long way ahead, the road was closer to the edge than it ought to be.

"There's a strip of fence gone," Harry said.

"I think the land has broken away there, that's what I think," I told him.

"Well, safety first," he said; "guess we'd better investigate. It may be just the shadow that makes it look that way, but that road looks too blamed near the edge to suit me."

"Safety first is right," Grove said.

Harry was just starting to get out and I was just going to tell him that I'd go, when all of a sudden Pee-wee was outside the car, shouting, "I'll take a squint." And before anyone else could get out, he was walking along the road ahead of us.

"Watch your step," Harry called after him, "and don't mistake a hole for a shadow."

"Don't you worry," Pee-wee shouted back.

We could see him moving along very carefully.

"Don't move the car," he called back; "keep the lights still—just where they are."

We all sat there waiting, and I remember just how Harry looked, leaning forward with his arms folded on the steering wheel. It was so still that I could hear Skinny breathing, asleep.

"Watch your step," Harry called; "how about it?"

Pee-wee was out of sight now; he answered, but we couldn't make out what he said. Then Harry called.

"All right? Shall we come ahead?"

That time there wasn't any answer.

Grove said, "Did you hear a sound like a branch crackling?"

"It was the wind, I guess," I said.

"How about it, Kiddo?" Harry shouted good and loud.

But there wasn't any answer, and I felt kind of funny. While we waited, I could hear Skinny breathing in his sleep, all the while.

CHAPTER XIX

WE LEARN THE WORST

I GUESS Harry was good and scared. I know *I* was. He just said, "You kids wait here, I'll be back."

He got out and went along the road and we watched him in the glare of the lights and didn't say anything to each other. I remember how Harry looked in the light—kind of as if he were covered with dust. We could hear him calling Pee-wee, but we couldn't hear any answer. His voice sounded funny like, because we were so kind of excited, and it was so still all about. Away far off I could hear a train whistle.

Grove said, "What do you think that sound like a branch breaking was?"

"How do *I* know?" I said. "Shh!"

"Shall we wake up the kid?" he asked me; "it makes me feel kind—oh, I don't know—to hear him breathing."

"Let the kid sleep," I said.

Harry was gone out of sight now, and neither one of us spoke, just sat there, waiting. It kind of hurt me to breathe. Pretty soon he came back, walking straight along and not calling to us at all.

"There's something the matter," Grove said.

When Harry got to the car he said, awful short and funny sort of, "Get those tools out, Roy, quick. I'm afraid to take the car any farther than this in the dark. Get the storage battery out, Grove—come on, *quick!* I want to see if I can't throw a light down the cliff up yonder."

"Where's Pee-wee?" I asked.

"I don't know," he said; "he isn't up there. Quick!"

We loosened the connections as fast as we could and took the battery and one of the headlights and everything we needed, and followed Harry along the road. "Keep close behind me," he said, "and step just where I step. Got the pincers?"

I was breathing kind of hard on account of there being a kind of lump in my throat, but I said, "Yop."

"And the extra wiring?"

"I've got it," Grove said.

He didn't say anything more, and we kind of

didn't dare to speak to him. Pretty soon we came to a place where there was a part of the cliff broken away outside the fence, and Harry sat down on a rock and started connecting up the light.

"I don't know if this blamed thing is going to work," he said.

"If—if he should be down there," Grove said; "could he be alive?"

Harry didn't answer at all, he was so busy and worried.

"I can climb down," I said, "if he's there. He —he did me many a good turn, that's one thing."

"I can see him now, the way he was talking to Mrs. West," Grove said.

"Here, stand this battery out of the way," Harry said. "Look out you don't trip over the wire. You boys keep back."

"I'm not going to keep back," I told him; "I want to see. If he's down there, I'm going down. I know that. Who's—who's got a—a better right to know than we have——"

Harry didn't say anything. It was only just that he was so worried and excited himself that he didn't want us near the edge. He held the headlight down over the edge of the cliff and we

could see a jumble of trees and rocks down there —away far down. Everything looked kind of gray.

"Look between those two rocks," Harry said, awful quiet. His voice sounded funny and different. Grove just crept back and then stood up, and I could hear him gulping there in the dark.

"It's—it's him," I said to Harry.

"I was afraid of it," Harry said. That was all he said. But I could see how the light moved and I knew he wasn't holding it steady. Pee-wee was wedged in between two rocks away down far below us. There couldn't be any mistake about it, because we could see his khaki suit plain.

"I'm going down," I said; "maybe—maybe I jollied him a lot, but he was a scout—he was—I'm going down——" That's just what I said.

Harry shook his head and just said, "It's all over, Roy. This is terrible."

"I'm going down anyway," I said.

CHAPTER XX

I DESCEND THE CLIFF

It wasn't any use for Harry to say what I should do, and I guess he knew it. Mostly we did what he said and that was only right, I have to admit it.

But, anyway, nothing could have stopped me then.

"You can't go down here," Harry said.

"I'll go up the road a ways," I told him; "it isn't so steep up farther."

Harry told Grove to go back and stay in the car with Skinny and not let him get out. Grove went back, keeping to the inside edge of the road. I started along the road, looking for a place where I could climb down and Harry threw the light along ahead of me, but I had to go so far that pretty soon I was out of its reach.

"The cliff lower up that way?" he called after me.

"It isn't so straight up," I shouted back;

"throw the light down where he is, so it will guide me when I get to the bottom."

It wasn't so hard scrambling down at the place I chose. I guess it was about five hundred feet further along from where Harry was, and about as far again from where the car was standing. The place wasn't so steep and it wasn't so high either, because the place where Harry was, was right about at the top of the hill. Only, one thing, it was mighty dark and blowing up windy, and while I was scrambling down I felt a drop of rain.

When I got to the bottom, I found it was all rough—rocky like—and it was hard to walk down. But, one thing, I could see the light good and plain. It looked just like a search-light, all straight and dusty, slanting down from the highest part of the cliff.

I called to Harry to ask him if it was pointed at the spot, but he didn't answer me. I guess the wind was the other way, and besides, a voice carries up better than it carries down. Anyway, I knew he was up there on account of the light.

I started stumbling over rocks to get to the place where that shaft of light ended. It made one of those big rocks awful bright, but I couldn't

see the other rock, because it was behind it. And I couldn't see the space between; I was kind of glad I couldn't. But I knew I had to come to it.

All the while, I could sort of hear Pee-wee, the way he talked to Mrs. West, and I remembered how we always laughed at him. I guessed we'd go right back and I wondered how we'd fix—I mean what we'd do with him—anyway, we'd have to carry the body to a town and then telegraph. I said I wouldn't want to be Harry to have to do that.

By now it was raining and blowing pretty hard. Two or three times I called up, but only once I could hear an answer, and even then I couldn't make out what he said. I had to climb over rocks and big trunks and roots of trees that must have fallen down from above some time or other. It was pretty hard. All of a sudden, that shaft of light that I was following was gone and I stood there in the rain and it was pitch dark all around.

I shouted up to Harry at the top of my voice, and there was some kind of an answer, but I couldn't make it out.

"What's the matter?" I yelled. "Throw the light down. I can't see."

I heard a voice that seemed kind of as if it was far, far off somewhere, and I listened, trying to make it out. I wasn't sure whether it was a voice or just the wind.

I called out, *"What?"* Gee, my head just throbbed from shouting so loud.

"*K-i-i-l-ld, k-i-i-i-l-ld.*" That's just what the voice seemed to say.

All of a sudden I stumbled over a rock and fell down in the pitch dark and knocked my head. For a second it made me see a bright light, but I knew it wasn't real. I could feel my forehead was bleeding. My leg was hurt too, so I couldn't get up. And my head just throbbed and throbbed and throbbed.

I called as loud as I could and it just made my head pound all the more.

I shouted, "Throw the light down here; I'm hurt!"

But the only answer I could hear was that voice saying, "*K-i-i-ild, k-i-i-ild*——"

CHAPTER XXI

I'M LEFT IN DARKNESS

I DIDN'T know why Harry should be calling to me that Pee-wee was killed, because we knew that. And it seemed awful spooky for him to be saying that one word; anyway, the word made it seem kind of ghostly-like. Especially, because it was against the wind and that makes a voice sound kind of not human.

As soon as I could, I got up, but I could hardly stand, I was so dizzy. I tied my scout scarf around my head, but the blood dripped down, only not so bad. It made my head ache terrible to look up the cliff. I couldn't see any light up there at all.

I guess if it hadn't been for Pee-wee, I would have just lain down and stayed that way, because I was so weak and dizzy. I couldn't shout for the light, because that made me weaker and it made my head swim. I just went stumbling over rocks and old roots and a couple of times

I had to sit down. My hands were cold just like ice.

Pretty soon I didn't know where I was at all. It was so dark that I couldn't even see the things near me. The rain was blowing in my face, too. Anyway, I knew one thing, and that was that if I lay down I would never be able to get up again. I didn't care so much only I wanted to see him first. Then if I was going to die, I would stay right there and die. Anyway, I didn't care much, because the troop would never be the same without Pee-wee. That was just the way it was, we were always kidding him, but when it came to doing something, he was the one to jump out of that car. While I was sitting on a rock, I kind of thought how it would be at Temple Camp without him; he was always getting into some scrape or other in the cooking shack. I never knew how much I cared about Pee-wee, until that night.

One thing, I don't get rattled in the dark; and I don't get lost easily either. If that shaft of light had never been there and if I had started down there in the dark, I guess I could have found the place where Pee-wee's body was. But when the light disappeared, all of a sudden, I

didn't know where I was at. And when I fell and hurt myself, that made it worse.

Besides, the wind and rain made it worse, too. I guess the rain must have been pouring down off that cliff like a water-fall. Anyway, I could hear the sound of water splashing.

I just groped about, pressing the scarf tight against my forehead to keep the cut from bleeding. I didn't know which way I was going, I bunked into rocks and trees, and sometimes I was up to my ankles in water. If I had come to the place where Pee-wee was, it would just have been luck. I wondered why some one else didn't come down, but I guessed they couldn't manage it, maybe because the rain was pouring over the edge.

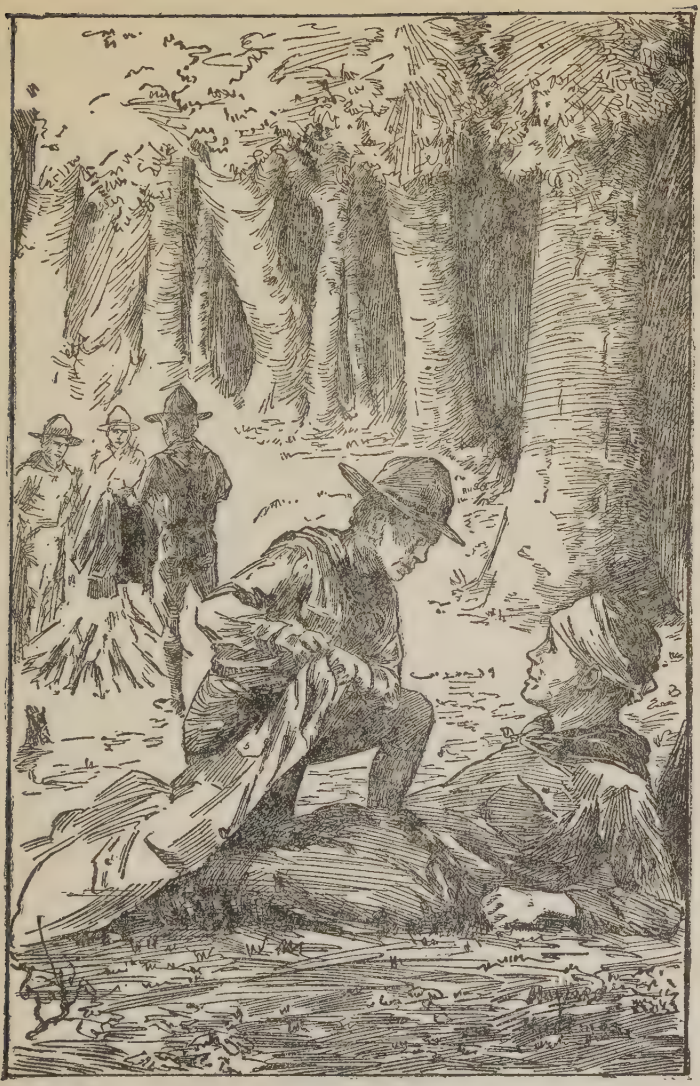
Pretty soon I knew I couldn't go any more; I tried, but I just couldn't. I had to sit down on a rock, I was so dizzy. I held my head in my two hands. Pretty soon I lay down on the rock and all the while I could hear the wind and the swishing of water and I wished they would stop. It was dark so I couldn't see anything. I guess I didn't know anything either, after that.

CHAPTER XXII

WE MEET

THEN something awful queer happened. Maybe it was a half an hour afterward, or maybe not so much—I don't know. But anyway, I saw a light. And I felt warm, sort of. And I guess I must have been asleep, because I didn't know what it was on my forehead, and I pulled the end of it and I could see it plain. It wasn't my scarf, because mine is gray, on account of my patrol being the Silver Foxes. But it was black with stripes across, and I knew it was the scarf of the Raven Patrol.

Then I saw there was a fire very near me—not so very near on account of the wind—but pretty near. And I thought Grove Bronson must be there, because he's a Raven. Then I guess I must have gone to sleep again, anyway, everything seemed kind of funny and I thought about how Grove Bronson couldn't get a fire started in the rain, because that's hard and only a few scouts



"I JUST WANT TO PUT THE DRY COAT OVER YOU."

Roy Blakeley's Silver Fox Patrol. *Page* 125

can do that. Then I sort of could see my mother and she was saying how I must stay home from school, only I knew I was out there in the rain and that it was summer and there wasn't any school.

Then all of a sudden, I could see a face and it scared me. It was all white and the hair was streaky from the rain. It was Pee-wee's face. There didn't seem to be anybody to it, only just a face. Pretty soon, it moved.

I said, *"Don't come near me! Stay away!* I'm sick and I'm hurt. You make me scared; don't come near me! If you're dead——"

"I just want to put the dry coat over you," he said; "so I can dry the other one. Don't you know me—Roy?"

"Pee-wee!" I just kind of gasped.

He said, "Lie still, don't sit up. They can see the fire; they're coming down. It's holding up now."

Then I could see the rest of him as he got up from behind the fire. And he came over with another coat that was dry and warm and laid it over me, and took the other one.

"I had a dandy idea," he said, and oh, gee, then I knew it was Peewee; "I fixed a rock so

it would get all warm underneath and the coats would keep dry while I heated them. I invented it; it's dandy."

I guess I must have been going all to pieces, anyway, I didn't know what I was doing, but I just put my arms around him and I said, "I don't care anything about the coats, Pee-wee, as long as you're alive—I don't. Honest, I don't. I don't care if I get wet——"

"You told me I couldn't start a fire in the rain," he said; "I've got a special way I do it——"

"Don't go away; stay right here," I told him. And I just held onto him.

"They're coming down, they can see the fire," he said. "Lie right still. Anyway, I'd like to tell you, because now we're alone here, and so I'd like to tell you that I'm not really mad when you think——"

All I could say was just, "Don't, kid; don't talk like that." And I held onto him tighter.

And all the while I could see the blaze and I could hear the wet wood on the fire crackling, and the flame made the whole cliff plain. And I could see how quick the rock was drying on account of the heat, and how fire is stronger than water after all, because if you can only start it

right it just laughs at rain. And anyway, a scout like Pee-wee is better than both, that's one sure thing.

Then pretty soon I could hear voices, not up on the cliff, but coming along down below and I could hear Skinny saying, "Will they be dead?"

And I could hear Harry say, "Yes, one of them, I'm afraid, Alf."

"That's where they all get left isn't it?" Pee-wee said. "I'm glad I'm alive just so as to fool them."

That was Pee-wee all over.

CHAPTER XXIII

WE BEGIN OUR SEARCH

HARRY and Grove and Skinny came plodding through the mud; they had come down the same way I had come down. And oh, boy, you should have seen the way they stared when they saw Pee-wee.

"You alive?" Harry said.

"I can prove it," Pee-wee shouted.

Harry just stood looking at him and scowling and whistling to himself, as if he couldn't believe his senses.

"If you don't believe I'm alive ask Roy," the kid blurted out.

"Any injuries? Anything the matter?" Harry asked him, and began to feel of him all over.

"Only I'm hungry," the kid said.

Harry just whistled for about half a minute and then he said, "Well, I suppose that a fall of two or three hundred feet is enough to give

one an appetite—if nothing else. How about you, Roy?"

I told them the best that I could about my adventures, and I asked him what had happened to the light.

"I stumbled over the storage battery and spilled the chemicals," he said.

"Was it you calling *killed?*" I asked him.

"It was I calling *spilled,*" he said.

"Good night!" Grove blurted out.

"It shows how much you all know," Pee-wee piped up. It was the same old Pee-wee. "I wasn't anywhere near those two rocks and I—I wouldn't know them if I met them in the street. I was sub-conscious in a tree—I mean unconscious. When I slipped up there, I went kerflop off the precipice—just like in the movies. There was a tree sticking out and I caught it and I was kind of stunned. But anyway, I stuck there in the branches, because I'm lucky. When I got all right again I managed to crawl along a little ways and then I slipped down and landed behind a rock or something, and below that it wasn't so steep. I went down, because I couldn't get up and I wandered around down there, until I heard somebody groaning. That was Roy."

"Why didn't you answer when I called?" Harry asked him.

"I guess I must have been unconscious then," the kid said. "How could I answer you if I was unconscious? I guess you were never unconscious."

Harry said, "Well, if I've never been unconscious, at least I'm stupified. Pee-wee, I think you have nine lives like a cat. I'll never worry about you again. Go where thou wilt. You were born under a lucky star. But tell me this, do either one of you nightly wanderers know who it is who lies wedged between those two rocks somewhere down here?"

"He's *surely* dead," little Skinny piped up; "isn't he?"

Harry said, "Yes, Alf, I don't believe we'll have to disappoint you again. He's *very* dead."

"Let's go and find him," Pee-wee shouted.

"Do you think you're able to move about, Roy?" Harry asked me.

"I started to find those two rocks and I'm going to find them," I told him.

"I'll help you along," Grove said.

We made torches and lighted them at the fire. The way you do that is, to get a good stick and

split it a little way and then split it crossways to that and keep on splitting it this way and that until the split parts are so thin that they just curl out and make a kind of a fuzzy topknot on the end of the stick. If you do it right, the stick will burn, for about half an hour. When we each had one, we started out to find the two rocks we had seen from up on the cliff and the body that we had seen between them.

"If it isn't a scout then it must be a soldier," Harry said, "because I'm sure about the khaki uniform."

Skinny kept right close to Harry; I guess he was kind of scared thinking about what we were going to find. I couldn't blame him, because it was kind of spooky, seeing those torches moving in the dark.

CHAPTER XXIV

WE BEHOLD A GHASTLY SIGHT

GROVE said it was pretty risky leaving the auto, with no lights on it up there in the road, but Harry said it was worse to leave some one dying maybe, but more likely dead, between two rocks down there in that jungle.

But anyway, this is what we decided to do. Grove said he'd go up with a torch and keep a fire burning near the machine, while the rest of us hunted around below. He went along under the cliff to where it wasn't so high and steep, and pretty soon we could see his torch bobbing along the road high up. Then pretty soon we could see a pretty good blaze up there and something black near it.

But down below we just couldn't find those rocks. We each went separately (except Skinny who stayed by Harry) but the more we hunted the more mixed up we got. Oh, boy, but that was some jungle! From up on the cliff those two

rocks had been good and plain, but now that we were down below, all the rocks looked alike. That's the way it is with rocks; they look different in a bird's-eye view.

After a while, Pee-wee shouted, "I've got a trail! I've got a trail! Come here, quick!"

Harry and I were pretty far apart, but we both heard him and followed the light of his torch until we got to the place where he was standing. Sure enough, there was a trail winding all in and out among the rocks.

"It's a sure enough trail all right," Harry said; "Pee-wee, you're a winner. I dare say this starts away up there along the road; it will show us the easiest way back, if it doesn't show us anything else."

"Will it show us that man that's dead?" little Skinny piped up.

Harry said, "I dare say, Alf; we'll soon see. If he wasn't thrown off the cliff he probably came by the trail."

"When I saw those rocks from above," I put in, "they looked too far out from the cliff for anybody to be thrown there, or to fall there."

Harry said, "Well, I dare say you're right. As long as we thought it was our young hero that

was wedged in there, and as long as we knew that the only way he could have got there was by falling, it didn't occur to me that it was pretty far out from the cliff."

"Then there's a mystery!" Pee-wee shouted.

"Yes?" Harry said. "Break it to us gently."

The kid said, "Well, if that man wasn't thrown down and didn't fall down, then how did he get down? He couldn't have come across far over toward the east there, because when I had the fire going, I could see it was all marshy."

"Well then, he came down by the trail," Harry said.

"All right, show me a footprint in this trail," Pee-wee shot right back at him.

Harry looked and I looked, and even little Skinny got down on his knees and looked, and there wasn't the sign of a footprint in that trail. It was soft there, too, and if there had been any footprints they would have shown good and clear.

"Maybe he came in an airplane," Skinny piped up.

"I guess if there was an airplane anywhere around here, we'd have found it before this," I said.

Harry said, "Well, I suppose it's possible that

somebody picked his way down the same as Roy did and then maybe stumbled. None of us know where those rocks are, but they did look pretty far out from above, and it does seem mighty funny that there aren't any footprints in this trail. Anyway, we'll push ahead and see what we see."

We went along the trail single file, Pee-wee going first, because if any one can follow a trail, he can. All the while we kept holding our torches down, looking for footprints, but there wasn't a sign of any. Then all of a sudden he stopped short, saying kind of scared sort of, "There it is! Look—straight ahead—I can see it."

About fifty feet ahead of us that trail ran between two big rocks, only they were farther apart and looked different than they did from up on the cliff. And right there in the trail between them lay a man with a soldier's uniform on. He was lying face down, and we knew he must be dead, because his arms were spread out and one of his legs was lying up over a corner of rock, kind of crazy like. No matter how badly injured a man may be, even if he's unconscious, he never lies sprawling like that. There's kind of a way that a dead person lies.

Pee-wee just stopped short in the trail and we all stopped behind him. I guess for just about a second, none of us wanted to go nearer. The way that man's leg was lying made me feel creepy. Harry said that was the way men lay on the battle field before the nurses took them—all sprawling, sort of.

Pretty soon Pee-wee moved a little nearer and held his torch toward the rocks.

"Funny there isn't any blood there," Harry said.

"Maybe the rain washed it away," I told him.

"Go ahead, Pee-wee," he said; "move along."

CHAPTER XXV

WE ADD ONE MORE TO OUR PARTY

BUT for just about a couple of seconds, Pee-wee didn't budge. Gee, I couldn't blame him.

"Look at Grove's light up there," I said.

Away up on the road we could see the fire good and plain, and even something dark moving near it.

"Shall I call to him?" I asked.

"No, don't," Harry said. I guess it was just because he didn't exactly want us to be shouting with that thing lying so near us. Anyway, we kind of spoke in whispers—I don't know why.

I said, "Well, you can see for yourself now that no one could fall as far out from the cliff as this. Grove's fire is right near the edge, isn't it? Look where that fire is and look where we are."

"It's blamed funny there aren't any foot-prints," Harry said; "he's right in the trail."

"It's a mystery like I told you," Pee-wee whis-

pered. As we moved nearer I could see how Skinny was clinging tight to Harry.

When we got near the rocks, Pee-wee seemed to get his nerve back—most always that's the way it is with scouts. Anyway, he has plenty now —that's one thing.

He was quite a little distance ahead of us and I saw him lean down and hold his torch over that body. Then, all of a sudden, he set up a shout that took me off my feet.

"I've solved the mystery! I've solved the mystery!" he yelled.

Harry said, "Shh, speak easy. Isn't he dead?"

"He—he—isn't even *alive*—I mean he wasn't!" our young hero shouted. "Look at him! Feel of him! The mystery is solved!"

It was solved, all right. Pee-wee grabbed hold of one of those sprawling legs and hauled that body out from between the rocks. The way he handled it, I'd say it weighed about five or six pounds. It was just a rag dummy.

We stuck our torches into the earth and sat down on one of those big rocks and had a good laugh.

"You thought it was *me,*" our young hero shouted; "you thought it was *me*——"

"You mean *I*, not *me*," Harry told him; "we realize now our mistake—that we should ever have mistaken one with a tongue like yours for a dummy. The plot certainly grows thicker; I never expected to find a rag soldier."

"Anyway, we've had a good time," Pee-wee said.

"Rag-time, I should say," Harry said; "but what is the meaning of this dark and dismal mystery? Why this rag-time dough-boy?"

"Search *me*," I said, "it has *me* guessing."

"That shows how much you all know," Pee-wee yelled; "that shows how much what-d'ye-call-it you have—deduction. This is where those movie men were making their play and that rag dummy got hurled off the cliff in a jealous rage, just the same the school teacher in *The Cowboy's Revenge!*"

"A jealous rage, hey?" Harry said.

"Sure," the kid said; "wasn't one of those movie men in Utica dressed like a soldier? That was the one that was supposed to be thrown off the cliff; that one is this one—see?"

Harry just sat there, whistling. Then he said, "I guess you're right, kid. They chucked him out too far. It was easy, because he didn't weigh

anything. This is the climax of a terrible tragedy."

"I—I bet it's a dandy play," Pee-wee said; "I'm going to see it when it comes out."

"Too bad it can't end with a picture of boy scouts on the trail of a rag dummy. The play might be called *The Ragtime Scouts,*" Harry said.

I said, "Yes, and who was the first one to say that was Pee-wee."

"Guilty," Harry said; "but yet I was right; I said there was no life in that figure, and there isn't. Shall we take our friend along with us? It seems kind of cruel to leave him here at the mercy of wind and storm."

"Sure, take him," I said; "we'll put him in the Raven Patrol; they're a lot of dead ones."

Harry slung Mr. Ragtime (that's what we called him) over his shoulder and we started back along the trail. On account of being wet, that dummy was heavier and it hung limp and looked even more like a real soldier than it did before, I guess. It seemed awful funny for Harry to be marching along ahead of us with that thing over his shoulder.

That trail ran along close under the cliff and showed us an easy way up. Pretty soon we hit

into the road and passed the place where we had supposed Pee-wee had fallen, and then came to the auto. Grove had the fire burning on the edge of the road right near the car, and he was sitting there keeping warm when we came along.

Harry said, "We've brought with us one of the most famous movie stars, the Hon. Ragtime Sandbanks; allow us to introduce him. He's full of stuff that isn't worth anything, like most movie plays. Just the kind of hero that you kids are fond of clapping your hands at. If they'd only take a few more of those celebrated movie stars and chuck them off a cliff, it would be a good thing. Well, Grove, old boy, you been lonesome waiting? Here old Ragtime, dry your clothes out if you want to ride with us."

"How are we going to ride without any juice?"* Grove wanted to know.

"We're not," Harry said; "who wants to volunteer to go to Lurin? That's the nearest town, I think. Take the old battery in and see if you can get another one. I don't see there's anything else we can do."

* Electricity.

CHAPTER XXVI

WE ARE PURSUED

Grove and I hiked along to Lurin. It was pretty dark and we had to be mighty careful for about half a mile, because the road ran right close to the cliff, but when we once got over the top of that hill, the going was easy.

We found a service station there and left our battery and got another one. By the time we got back and Harry got everything connected up all right, it was daylight.

He had to run that machine mighty careful for a ways, because we were pretty close to the edge. We could look down and see that place below good and plain in the daylight. We could see the trail, too, and just how everything was, and it seemed funny that any of us could ever have got lost down there. That shows the difference between day and night. But anyway, I like night better on account of camp-fire. Only I don't like home work. I like the middle of the night best

of all, but I like the two ends of it, too. I like one end on account of breakfast, and the other on account of supper. The reason I like the middle of the day is on account of lunch. June is my favorite month, because that's when my birthday is, and one thing, I'm glad there's a week between Christmas and New Year's, because on account of holidays. I wish there was a week between Thanksgiving, but anyway, that hasn't got anything to do with that automobile trip. I just thought I'd tell you.

It was dandy to see the sun coming up that morning—that's one thing I like about the sun. But, oh, boy, weren't we hungry! Grove and I sat on the back seat with Ragtime Sandbanks (that's the name we gave him) sitting up between us. He was all nice and dry by that time. He looked as if he didn't have any sense. Harry says that's the way it is with movie stars. Cracky, that fellow's all the time knocking the movies. I guess he does it just to get Pee-wee started.

Let's see, where was I? Oh, yes, now comes a peachy adventure. Remember how I told you that Grove and I had Ragtime Sandbanks sitting up between us? Well, pretty soon, after we had got down to level country and were making the

speedometer earn its board, I happened to look around and, *good night,* there was an automobile coming along lickety-split, about a quarter of a mile behind us.

"They're breaking the speed laws," I said.

"Believe me, they're smashing them all to pieces," Grove put in.

Harry didn't bother about them, just kept her rolling along at about twenty per, when all of a sudden we heard the people in that car shouting at us to stop.

"You don't suppose it can be Brent Gaylong and his patrol, do you?" I asked.

Harry said, "No, they're waiting for us up in the woods by this time."

"It's a flivver," Grove said.

"Some nerve; a flivver calling to a Cadillac to stop," I said.

"Are we going to get arrested now?" Skinny sung out in that funny high voice. Gee whiz, you could hardly blame him, after all the crazy things that had happened.

Harry said, "Maybe, but I couldn't promise you. Perhaps so, if you're good."

We just kept running along about the same as before; Harry wouldn't bother to stop and he

wouldn't bother to go faster. And all the while that other machine came zig-zagging and rattling along pell-mell, with the men in it shouting for us to stop.

Pretty soon, good night, there was a shot!

"Huh," Harry said, all the while stopping the machine; "looks like business; I guess we're pinched."

"That shot went over our heads," I said, "they didn't mean to hit us."

Harry said, "No, but they meant to scare us and make us stop; I wonder what we're up against now."

All of a sudden a thought popped into my head. "Hurry up," I said to Grove; "let's throw Ragtime Sandbanks out and they'll think they killed him. Throw him out so he'll go down that bank beside the road—quick!"

In about a jiffy out went our old college chum, Ragtime Sandbanks sprawling kerflop on the edge of the road and kerplunk down into the ditch where there was water running.

"So long, old pal!" I shouted after him; "you died in a good cause."

"Victim of an assassin," Pee-wee said.

"He landed in the water," Grove said.

"How can you *land* in *water?*" Pee-wee wanted to know, all the while craning his neck out of the car. "He sank," he shouted; "I don't see him."

"End of *The Cowboy's Revenge,*" Harry said; "what do you suppose will be the next act in this interesting comedy?"

"I think we're pinched," I said.

"What did we do?" Grove wanted to know.

"Who committed this murder? It wasn't any of us," I said.

Harry just sat there with his arms on the wheel, looking around and waiting for that car to catch up with us, and laughing.

"I wish Brent was here," he said; "I think we're going to have some fun. This is right in his line."

CHAPTER XXVII

WE ARE CAUGHT

THERE were three men in that car and as soon as they caught up with us, I knew they were sheriffs or detectives or something like that, on account of their being big and kind of bossy looking.

They got out and came up to our car and one of them said, very loud and gruff. "What are you doing with that car?"

"Why, we're just sitting in it laughing," Harry said. "Here's another; why is a Ford like a poisonous snake? Give it up? Because it has a rattle. Let's tell some more."

"Who was that you throwed out of this car?" the man shouted right in Harry's face. All the while the other two men were down in the ditch looking for the dummy. I guess it must have gone down in the water, anyway, they couldn't find it.

Harry said, "Oh, that was really your fault; you should be more careful when you shoot at

random. That was a very famous personage—Mr. R. T. Sandbanks."

Gee, I could hardly keep a straight face. The men just stood there staring, and Harry just sat there with his arms folded on the steering wheel, smiling just as nice as could be. Poor little Skinny was clinging to his arm. Pee-wee and Grove and I sat on the back seat trying not to laugh. Those men looked at us as if they thought it was funny for boy scouts to be there, but we should worry about them. Our consciences were clear, only we were hungry.

"Look here, you," the big man said to Harry; "you got to explain your movements—and your actions."

"Our actions can't be explained," Harry said; "we're all crazy. But anything we can do to accommodate you——"

All the while the other two men were poking around in the creek with sticks. The big man shook his finger right in Harry's face and said, "You're the feller that was in Wade's Hotel in Utica with a car with a New York license. You were seen there. You had some stolen property in that car. You've changed your license plate since then. Been in Crystal Falls ain't you? Get

out of there, you kids, and let me look under that seat. What are you doing with a crowd of young boys in this car, anyway?"

Harry said, "My goodness, what a lot of questions! You're a regular questionnaire, aren't you? Get up, boys."

We got up and he dug around under the back seat, but didn't find anything. Then he dug in the side pockets and, good night, there were our "papers" as Pee-wee called them.

He said, "What's all this, eh?"

Harry said, "Those? Oh, those are just some papers. One of them is a letter, and let's see, those two are newspaper articles and the other is a description of a tree. Do you like trees? We're crazy about trees."

Oh, boy, you should have seen that man. He read those papers over and scowled. "Train robbed, huh?" he said. "Shootin' goin' on, huh? Now, who are you, anyway, and who did you throw out of this car, and where did you get this car, and where did you get this here license plate that you're using?"

Harry said, "Well, it's a long story and really it would be a shame to tell it, unless we were all sitting around the camp-fire. We're a band of

adventurers and we're on our way to see what will happen next. Our specialties are murder, burglary, treasure hunting and food, when we can get it. Going to be warm to-day, don't you think so?"

Honest, that man hardly knew what to say, he was so flabbergasted. I guess he must have felt like Alice in Wonderland, hey? With men being thrown out and disappearing and nice little boy scouts instead of burglars, and papers that he couldn't make out the meaning of at all. He just looked around kind of puzzled, and all the while Harry sat there with his arms folded on the wheel—oh, boy, I could hardly keep a straight face.

Pretty soon the man said, "Well, young feller, you got to give an explanation of your whereabouts. You were seen in Utica with this car and you had some valuables in it. A porter in the hotel seen them under the seat. You went away and later passed through Utica with this same car. And what did you do with that stuff? And where'd you get your plate changed? Just let's see your card."

Harry showed him his driver's card. Gee whiz, I wanted Harry to tell him that scouts

don't get mixed up with burglaries and things like that, but he didn't bother to tell him anything. I guess he thought that anybody ought to know that much. Cracky, I wouldn't be a burglar.

Then he walked all around the car, sizing it up; I guess he was hunting for some kind of clews or other. Then he whispered with the other men. And all the while, Harry just sat there smiling.

I said, "Why, don't you tell them how it was?"

"They wouldn't believe us," Harry said; "don't you know you can't tell a detective anything? You've got to let him crack his head against a stone wall."

"Will we get put in jail?" Skinny asked.

"Guess not," Harry said; "my one regret is, that Brent isn't here. He'd enjoy this. Evidently these fellows belong in Utica and they're a little behind on their information. I rather prefer our old friend, the constable."

Pretty soon the big man left the other two poking around in the water, and came over and said, "I'll ride into Lurin with you. You'll have to go before a justice you fellers. You got to explain your movements. Was that man you threw out of the car, dead?"

Harry said, "Oh, very dead. I don't think I've ever seen anybody so dead before."

"Well, then, you killed him," the man said; "'twasn't no shot of ours. How'd that man come by his death, huh?"

"He was thrown off a cliff," Harry said.

"Well, we'll find out who threw him off," the man said.

Harry said, "Oh, that's easy; fifteen cents and the war tax, and you'll know the whole story. Climb over in back Alf, and let this gentleman sit here."

Just then one of the other men came dragging poor Mr. Ragtime Sandbanks after him. He looked awful silly—I mean the man. The poor old dummy was all soaked and his legs and arms flopped this way and that. Harry looked, but didn't seem especially interested.

"So that's it, is it?" the big man said.

"That's it," Harry said.

"A dummy!" the man just what-do-you-call-it —you know—*ejaculated.*

"Oh, don't call yourself names," Harry said.

Jimin*etty*, you should have seen that man.

CHAPTER XXVIII

OUR CASE IS DISMISSED

Oh, boy! Laugh! I guess, to use Pee-wee's favorite words, those men thought we were some *deep mystery*. I guess they didn't know what to think at all. Anyway, two of them took the dummy in the Ford and the big man rode with us—pity the dummy! That was the hardest part of all his adventures.

It was awful funny to hear Harry talking on the front seat. He said, "I've often wondered why you fellows don't get after the garage-keepers—they're the real robbers. I'd be willing to take my chance with a highwayman, but with a garage-keeper, nix."

In Lurin, we all stopped in front of a nice white house that had a sign on the door that said:

GEORGE WINTERS
JUSTICE OF THE PEACE

I guess poor little Skinny thought our

mad career of evil was up at last. Pee-wee looked kind of scared, too.

We all went in and stood in front of a desk and George Winters, Justice of the Peace, sat on the other side of it. He wasn't cross and ugly at all. He said good morning, and he thought it would be a nice day.

"Not if we go to jail it won't," Pee-wee said.

"Will we have to stay as much as ten years?" little Alf, wanted to know.

Justice Winters said, "Well, what's all the trouble?"

The big man told him that they gave us the chase out of Utica. Can you beat that? A flivver chasing a Cadillac! Excuse me, while I laugh. He told the Justice how we had reached Utica very early in the morning and had stopped at a hotel, and how a porter who was cleaning up in the sheds had seen the things under the back seat of the car. Then he said how we left very suddenly and, several hours later, were seen passing through Utica again with a different number on our machine. He didn't say anything about Mr. Ragtime Sandbanks. Gee whiz, I didn't blame him for that.

But Harry wasn't going to let him off so easy.

He said, "You forgot to tell the Justice about the murder we committed. We wish to plead guilty to that."

Oh, gee, that poor man; he had to tell about the whole business, how they hunted around in the water and found the rag dummy. That Justice scowled, kind of, and I guess he didn't know what it all meant, but anyway, he had to smile.

"That shows we're innocent," Pee-wee spoke up, "because if a thing isn't alive, you can't murder it, can you?"

Justice Winters sort of smiled and he said, no, you couldn't.

After he had listened to what all those men had to say, he said, "Well, you wish to make a charge against these people?"

"I want 'em held for complicity," that's what the big man said.

"That's one thing we didn't do, anyway," Pee-wee said; "complicity. How did we complicit?" Justice Winters smiled kind of, and began rooting around among a lot of papers. He said, "Well, I'm glad you caught these fellows, because they're wanted."

The big man said, "I knew there was something wrong when I heard of their coming back

through Utica with a different license plate and getting off the state road and cutting up through the hills. They was looking to get off the main line of travel."

Justice Winters said, "We have already received a phone message to have them stopped when they passed through the town. Judge West of Crystal Falls, lost no time in having them traced. It is fortunate that you caught them, though our own authorities were on the watch." He began rooting among his papers some more, and pretty soon he picked up a long envelope.

You ought to have seen Pee-wee and Skinny. They looked as if all hope was lost. Even Harry looked kind of puzzled. But those men—oh, didn't they look chesty!

"I knew there was something wrong about 'em," the big man said.

Justice Winters said, "Yes, you've made a good capture. I was talking on the 'phone with Judge West last night, and promised to have this party stopped if they passed through. Very early this morning I received a special delivery letter from him. I will read it to you."

"I'm glad we were able to do a favor for the Judge," that big man said, awful important like.

"We haven't found his valuables yet, but we will. This oldest fellow knows where they are."

"Right the first time," Harry said; "I do."

Then the Justice read the letter and *g-o-o-d night,* this is just what it said:

"Dear Justice:—

"Pursuant to our 'phone talk just now, I am enclosing check for five hundred dollars, payable to bearer, by registered special delivery. I hope it will reach you before this young man and his friends pass through your town. I was sorry not to see them when they restored our property. Please hand him this check, which is for the amount of the reward I offered, and insist upon these boys accepting it. I do not know where they belong and could probably never get in touch with them, so do not let them get away. Convince them that this money is theirs, and that they earned it.

"Hurriedly,

"Josiah E. West."

"That's all there is to it," Justice Winters said; "there's no use trying to get the better of a man

like Judge West. Which would you prefer to do; accept the money, or have me hold you on a technical charge of appropriating a rag dummy, until I can notify the Judge?"

"You'd—you'd better take the check, Harry," Pee-wee piped up; "it wouldn't be safe to try to foil a man like Judge West—safety first, Harry —we'd better take the check."

I wish I had a snapshot of those three men to show you—especially the big one. They looked as if they were suffering from shell shock.

CHAPTER XXIX

WE HAVE AN ELECTION

So that was the end of Mr. Ragtime Sandbanks; anyway, it was the last of him as far as we know. Harry said maybe those men would get him a job as a detective. Gee whiz, there are worse detectives, believe me. Harry said he was one of the greatest movie heroes that ever lived—or *didn't* live; what's the difference? He said he liked him, because he didn't keep smiling all the time and aiming pistols like some movie heroes. Some knocker.

We had a conclave about that five hundred dollars; that's what Pee-wee called it—a *conclave.* And we voted whether we should keep it or not. Pee-wee said it would be contempt of court not to keep it, and that a scout must obey his superiors. Skinny said if we didn't take it, maybe we'd all have to go to jail. Harry said it might be fun to go to jail, because that was one of the things he had never done.

I said, "The longer you put it off, the more you'll enjoy it; lots of people are in too much of a hurry to go to jail."

Cracky, we didn't know what to do, because a scout is supposed not to take anything for a service. We sat there in the auto talking and talking about it, and all of us kept changing around, and I guess we didn't know what would be right for us to do.

I said, "If it was just a glass of soda or something like that, I'd know what to do with it."

Pee-wee said, "Sure, even if it was two glasses."

"I could handle six just now," Grove put in.

"Some bunch!" I said; "any one would think we were hunting for sodas instead of buried treasure."

"If I had a soda it would be a buried treasure in about ten seconds," Pee-wee shouted. Can you beat that kid?

Harry said, "Well, here we are talking about ice-cream sodas when the paramount issue is a five hundred dollar check."

"What kind of an issue?" Pee-wee piped up.

Grove said, "I vote not to take it."

"I'll take the same," Pee-wee said.

"Where do you think your are; in a candy store?" I asked him.

"I mean I vote the same," he said.

Skinny said, "I vote to take it, because I'm afraid of that judge."

Harry said, "Well, so far everybody has voted both ways, so everybody wins, including Judge West."

"I vote in the positive," our young hero said.

"You mean negative," I told him; "what do you think this outfit is; a storage battery?"

"I mean infirmative," he shouted.

"Which is the best thing to do?" Harry said.

"I vote that it is," Grove spoke up.

"What is?" Harry said.

"I vote we get some breakfast," poor little Skinny piped up.

"Carried by an unanimous majority," I shouted.

Then Harry said, "Now, you kids listen to me, and keep still a minute. There's a way of getting around that law."

Pee-wee shouted, "Is it a long way around? Because I'm hungry."

"No, it's a short cut around the outside," Harry said. "We can take the check and beat

Judge West at his own game. We can show him that boy scouts are not to be trifled with and browbeaten. . . ."

"You'd better not, Harry," Pee-wee said; "safety first. Gee, I'm not afraid of rattlesnakes or wasps or mince pie; but *judges*—good night!"

Harry said, "We'll just take this check and when we get to Temple Camp, if we ever do, we'll make arrangements to have a shack or a cabin built there; maybe we could build it ourselves; and we'll endow it. . . ."

"Shingles are better," Pee-wee shouted.

"We'll use what we need to build it," Harry said, "and the rest we'll put in the bank, and we'll get your scoutmaster and the rest of you wild Indians interested, and we'll have that cabin maintained for poor troops that can't afford the regular troop cabins. I don't believe the trustees will have any objection. I don't believe that scout law means that you can't take money and use it to help others; it means that you can't take it and just buy sodas with it. That's my idea."

"Oh, boy! Five hundred dollars worth of sodas! Mm—mmm!" Pee-wee put in.

I said, "Yes, and if we find the bags of gold dust, we'll add that to it, too."

"That's what we will," Harry said.

"And I've got a dandy idea," Pee-wee shouted. "As long as we've been mixed up with burglaries and all like that, and as long as we got this money in that way, we'll have that cabin named *Robbers' Cave.*"

I said, "Sure, because really we have to thank those burglars. If it hadn't been for them, we wouldn't be able to help poor scouts."

"You're crazy!" Pee-wee shouted.

"Roy is right," Harry said. "We should not forget the poor, honest, hardworking burglars who never receive credit. They help the homeless, and feed the hungry and give poor boys a little whiff of the fresh country air, and for this they are denounced and misjudged. Never speak unkindly of the poor, charitable, kind-hearted burglar."

Honest, that fellow is crazier than the rest of us. Poor little Skinny didn't seem to know what to think.

CHAPTER XXX

WE SEE OUR FRIENDS

ALL the fellows said that was a good idea, and Grove said that if the trustees didn't like the name of Robbers' Cave, we would call the cabin, West Cabin, on account of Judge West. Pee-wee said the only good place left for a cabin at Temple Camp was on what we called East Hill, and if it was on East Hill, how could we call it West Cabin?"

"Anyway, let's get some breakfast," I said.

So then Harry called up Judge West in Crystal Falls, and I guess Judge West must have been a pretty nice man, because Harry was laughing a lot while they were talking. You bet that fellow knows how to talk to anybody. Especially girls.

He said, "Well, it's all right; I told the judge all about it and he's strong for Robbers' Cave—he says he likes that name best. He seems to think he'd like to visit Temple Camp some time."

"What did you tell him?" Pee-wee wanted to know.

"I told him to bring his knitting and stay all day," Harry said; "I told him he could be one of the judges in the pancake race."

"What did he say?" he kid piped up, all excited.

"He said he's crazy about pancakes," Harry told us.

"Believe *me,* he isn't any crazier than I am," I said.

So that was what put the idea of pancakes into our heads, and we went into a funny little place in that village and had some dandy ones. When you get started eating pancakes, it's awful hard to stop. After that we started off again and by lunch time, we were in Watertown.

Skinny said, "I'm glad we're in Watertown, because I want a drink of water."

"I wish we'd get to Iceland, and then we'd get some ice cream," I told him.

On the road maps they show you the best hotels —anyway, that's what they call them. Believe me, if I ever make a road map, I'll show Wessel's in Watertown, because that's where you get the ice-cream cones—oh, *bibbie!*

Now, this is my advice to you if you're taking the road from Watertown to Steuben Junction—*don't.* But if you take it, for goodness' sake take it away altogether. Because it only gets in your way.

"It must have been awful in that flivver, coming along here," Harry said.

"Anyway, you bet I'll be glad to see Brent and those fellows," I told him.

"I only hope we find them," Harry said.

"I only hope we find the treasure," Grove spoke up.

Harry said, "Yes, we'll have to get on the job now and remember that we're out for buried gold."

It was fine going from Watertown to Steuben Junction, even if the road was bad. Because anyway, even if motoring is a lot of fun, that isn't what scouts think most about. What they think most about is the woods. And we went through dandy woods. I was glad we had to go slow, because we like to be in the woods. Gee, that was one good thing about that road anyway—it went through the woods.

It was nice and dark in there and in some places you could only just see the sky through the trees.

There were a lot of squirrels, too, in those woods. I like the red ones best. But you can't tame a chipmunk. Squirrels you can. It reminded me of Temple Camp to hear the birds, because at Temple Camp that's the first thing you hear mornings. Robins, gee, there are a lot of them up there. Right near our troop cabin there's an elm with seven of them in it. One more and they'd be a full patrol.

Harry said, "Nice riding through here, hey?"

Grove said, "Listen to that noise."

"It's a tree-toad," Pee-wee said; "don't you know a tree-toad when you hear one?"

Harry stopped the car and we all listened. "Sounds like a baby," that's just what he said.

"It isn't," I told him; "it's a tree-toad, all right. Do you know why he calls like that? It's to let the birds know to get out of the tree, because it belongs to him."

"Some nerve," Grove said.

Harry just sat there listening, awful interested like. Then he said, "Well, I suppose it belongs to him as much as to any one else. How would you like to get a shot at him?"

"He should worry," I said; "scouts aren't supposed to kill things."

Harry just kind of kept humming and listening.

I said, "You've had a lot of adventures, that's one sure thing, but do you like to kill things?"

"I've killed a lot of time in my life," he said.

"Time isn't alive," Skinny piped up; "animals are alive."

"So are trees if it comes to that," I said.

Harry just kind of sat there for about half a minute, leaning his arms on the steering wheel and looking all around in the woods. I guess he was kind of dreaming like.

All of a sudden he said, "Well, this isn't hunting for buried treasure is it? No scout rule against that, is there?"

"Believe me, buried treasure is our favorite nickname," I told him.

"Nice and quiet in here," he said; "I hate to hit into open country. Look at that old oak; be a pretty rich tree-toad that owns that chunk of real estate, hey?"

All of a sudden little Alf piped up, in that funny way he has. He said, "Trees are friends, that's what it says in the scout book."

He meant the handbook. I guess his speak-

ing up like that kind of, you know, roused us up out of our dreaming. Anyway, Harry said, "Guess you're right, Alf old boy."

Then we started along.

CHAPTER XXXI

WE RECEIVE DARK TIDINGS

After a little while, Pee-wee shouted, "Oh, I see Steuben Junction! I see a house!"

"That's it," I told him; "I knew there was a house in Steuben Junction."

"Do you see the white house?" he yelled.

"Sure, I can even see the President sitting in one of the windows," Grove said; "it's the White House all right."

"I see it," Alf said.

"Sure, right in among the trees," I told him; "it's a kind of a light shade of white."

Harry said, "Well, we seem to be approaching the desert island. Now for the bags of gold."

"I'm going to buy a wireless outfit with my share," Pee-wee said.

"I'm going to buy a bicycle with mine," Alf said; "I'm going to get one painted green."

"I think I'll get a pound of sugar with my share," I said.

Grove said he was going to get a camping kit. Harry said that maybe he'd get an egg with his share, and if he had any left, he'd donate it to the poor starving garage keepers. He said, "So you see, there's a couple of billion dollars spent already. We've been very extravagant. I'm sorry we spent it all before we got it."

Pee-wee said, "The time for us to dig up that treasure is at night—in the darkness."

"In the which?" Harry asked him.

"In the dead of night," Pee-wee said; "that's the way Captain Kidd used to do."

Harry said, "I don't think the night is likely to be very dead with this bunch around. It might get sick though."

"Good night, I wouldn't blame it if it did," I told him.

"We'll make torches, hey?" Pee-wee said, all excited.

"Have we got anything to strain the gold in?" Harry asked. "You're the property man, Pee-wee."

"I got the coffee strainer from the kitchen," the kid said; "I brought a rolling-pin, too. Because you know sometimes they roll gold."

"You should have brought a couple of dishes

along, in case we should want to plate it," Harry said, all the while laughing. I guess you know by this time that we were all crazy—not exactly crazy, but insane. We should worry.

Steuben Junction was about as big as New York. I mean New York before Columbus landed. It was so big, you could have it sent home C. O. D., but anyway, there was a nice man there; he was the man that kept the station. He gave us a letter that Brent Gaylong had left with him—gee whiz, it sounded just like Brent.

This is what it said, because I kept it:

On board Good Ship
Flivver making port.

Yo ho, Messmates:—

After a rough and stormy voyage, made port of Steuben Junction safely. Natives friendly. Were tossed at the mercy of rocks and breakers on road through woods. Water ran out—of radiator. Had to take some out of springs to keep from famishing. Springs were no good anyway. They wouldn't spring—not even in the springtime. Had to man pumps—tires were leaking so badly. Cap blew out—also two tires.

Breakers broke pretty nearly everything, including brakes. Leaks gained fast—carburator flooded. Mutiny on board. Seaman Wide-Awake in irons. Also chains and wheels. Tried to clutch a floating log, but clutch wouldn't work. Ship in dry dock in back of stationery store.

Are starting to follow railroad tracks into woods. Will leave sign alongside tracks where you are to turn in. Will blaze trees to our camp. Follow signs. Look out for spies—keep away from ice-cream parlor. Suspicious. Beware of poisoned gum drops. The treasure will be ours, but have a care. Efforts are being made to foil us—two Spanish onions were seen in Steuben Junction, loitering near post office.

Hurry, B. G.

When we had read the letter, Harry said, "The plot grows thicker; we haven't a minute to spare. We must moor our ship and be on the trail. I wonder where that stationery store is. I think that Brent has not told us all. You'd better keep your hand on that rolling-pin, Scout Harris, and hang onto that coffee strainer, in case we should want to sift any evidence."

CHAPTER XXXII

WE HIT THE TRAIL

I GUESS we were all pretty excited on account of at last being right up in the neighborhood of that treasure, and near the very place where the train with that old car of ours was held up.

Anyway, you would have said we meant business if you had see Pee-wee unloading the auto in that shed behind the stationery store. Brent's car was in there, too. Our young hero had two shovels and a pickaxe and a couple of big burlap bags, and he looked like a striking miner as he trudged up the road with all that junk over his shoulders. Pretty soon we took some of the things from him. But he kept the rolling-pin and a big saucepan; hanged if I know what the saucepan was for.

We had a couple of scout belt-axes along, but no camping stuff, because we hadn't thought that we'd stay up there very long.

Pretty soon we hit into the railroad tracks and

followed them north. I guess the people who saw us thought we were crazy. Harry said Pee-wee looked like Don Quixote, with all that junk hanging from him.

Harry said, "It will be easy to find Brent's sign and to follow his blazing in the woods, but how are we going to find out where the hold-up occurred? That's the question."

"We're going to hunt for a tree like the one we have a description of," Grove said.

"That seems about the only thing to do," Harry said; "the tracks aren't going to tell us anything."

Steuben Junction was in a kind of opening in the woods; it was like a little village in a clearing, sort of. Part of those woods we had come through in the auto. In the part where the tracks ran north of the village the woods were awful thick and were right up close to the tracks on both sides. It was a single track road.

We knew that Brent didn't know anything except just what we had told him about that big balsam poplar, and we thought that he wouldn't have bothered his head about that in looking for a good place to camp. We thought he'd just wait for us

When we had gone a little distance from the village, we divided into two parties, and each kept in the woods a little way off from the tracks, one party on the west side and the other party on the east side.

Harry said, "Well, there's one good sign and that is that none of the trees in this woods are poplars, except a few dead ones. What we have to do is to hunt for a big, tall, husky stranger. That old giant of the north doesn't die as easily as most of the poplar family."

"That's a good name for it," I said; "the Giant of the North."

"Maybe even if one grew it would be dead by now," Grove said.

"Even still we might find it," Harry said.

"Would it stand up if it got dead?" Skinny wanted to know.

"If there's one here it won't be dead," Harry said; "he's a pretty old customer, that tree; old 'Rough and Ready.' Only it's like hunting for a needle in a haystack."

Grove said, "I wish we could reduce the area of search." Isn't that a peach of a sentence? Believe me, he's some highbrow, Grove is.

All of a sudden, Pee-wee stopped short. Gee

whiz, I thought he had found the treasure.

"Break it to us gently," I said.

"I know how to reduce the area of search!" he shouted.

"All right, go ahead and reduce it," Harry told him.

"Listen—all listen!" the kid said. "I have a —you know—one of those things——"

"An inspiration?" Grove asked him.

"We don't need to hunt on both sides of the track," the kid shouted, "because I can do a deduction—a good one. Do you remember that bullet hole in the side of the car? If the bullet came through there and hit that man Thor, then he must have been riding with the seat frontways, and if that seat was frontways on a train going south, it means he must have been on the left side of the car. We don't need to bother about looking in the woods on the other side of the track at all. *All* come over on this side. I reduced the airplane of search—I mean the area."

For about half a minute, Harry just stood there thinking, and then he said, "I'm hanged if you're not right, Pee-wee. How did you happen to evolve that in your noodle? You're a bully

little scout." Then he said, "I've often noticed that if a fellow is a scout, he's a scout more than he is anything else. He may be a motor-boatist or a motorist or a tennis player, he may be a catcher or a pitcher or a sodalogist——"

"What's that?" I asked him.

"An ice-cream soda specialist," he said. "But when it comes to a showdown, a scout is just a scout and that's all there is to it. Am I right?"

"Thou never spakest a truer word," I told him. "Being a scout is like a 1916 Ford—you never can get rid of it."

"That's the idea," Harry said; "a scout's a scout and there you are."

"He's a friend to everything that lives," little Alf sang out; "it says so in the book."

"That's what he is, Alf," Harry said.

So then we all kept to the one side of the track, and we were saved a lot of trouble by Pee-wee's deduction. The kid is sure great on deduction—deduction and movies. And his favorite hero is apple pie. Gee williger, I guess we could pretty near feed Austria with the war tax he pays down at the Lyric Theatre. Harry says if Pee-wee were to stop eating, the price of everything would go down. Anyway, he controls the wheat market

—eating nine wheat cakes at a sitting. But he's great on deduction.

One thing, Harry was sure right when he said that when it comes to a showdown a scout is a scout—I have to admit it. Anyway, it seemed kind of natural like, to be walking through those woods; it seemed just like at Temple Camp. You wouldn't have known there was a village within a couple of hundred miles. Gee, I'm not saying anything against the Cadillac, but I like to hike; I'd rather hike than ride in a machine. I guess that's because I'm a scout, hey? Especially I like hiking through the woods. Sitting on a porch, that's one thing I hate. I hate algebra, too. My father says it's good to know algebra, even if you don't want to be especially good friends with it. I'll let it alone if it'll let *me* alone—that's what I told him. Anyway, it was dandy in those woods.

CHAPTER XXXIII

WE MEET A FRIEND

PRETTY soon we saw a stick stuck in the ground near the track on our side. It was split a little way down and another stick was crossways in it. One end was peeled and it meant that we should go the way that pointed. That's a scout sign. If you ever see one like that, go where it points and maybe you'll get something to eat.

But anyway, we didn't have to go far, for almost right away we heard a voice, and it was Brent's. They had their tent up quite near the tracks and we saw it almost as soon as we saw the stick.

It was a peachy place for a camp. Brent was sitting on a rock, making some kind of a birch-bark thing, and those kids were sitting around him. Cracky, they were all crazy about that fellow.

Little Willie Wide-Awake piped up, *"Oh, here they are! Here they are!"*

Harry said, "Hello, you old grouch; we got your letter. Hello, kids; well, here we are at last, after many ups and downs and thrilling adventures."

"When it comes to ups and downs. you haven't got anything on us," Brent said; "did you come up that road through the woods? We were hoping you wouldn't find us so easily."

"If you were any nearer the track, you'd get run over," Harry said.

Brent said, "We were hoping you'd search for days and days and not find us, and then just as you were starving—just as Pee-wee was breathing his last—little Bill here, would come and place a gum drop between his emaciated lips. Everythings seems to go wrong on this trip."

"Same old Brent," Harry said; "well, here we are, ready to search for the treasure."

"It's all over except the shouting," Brent said.

"You don't mean you've found it?" Pee-wee piped up.

"Take a good look at this tree," Brent said; "come off here a little distance where you can see it."

We all went about twenty feet from the tree and took a good look at it.

"What do you say?" Brent said.

Oh, boy, I had never seen another tree like that in all my life. Most of the trees around there were birches, and it stood there among them just like a great big giant. I guess the trunk of that tree was four or five feet thick. Away up high, oh, about a hundred feet I guess, it went to a point. There weren't any other trees around there anything like it, or anywhere near as big. Away up high near its top it was all kind of gold color, because the sun was beginning to go down. It seemed sort of, as if it paid attention to that great big tree first of all, because it was so grand.

"It's a poplar, all right," Harry said, sort of low, because I guess we all felt kind of serious to see it standing there. We knew we were going to hunt for such a tree, and we thought there was a pretty fair chance of there being one somewhere around there. But now that we all stood there looking at it, we just couldn't speak, exactly. I noticed even Pee-wee, just standing there gaping. One thing sure, that great big tree was a stranger in those woods. It seemed proud, but kind of lonely there. Especially when you looked away up high at it, it seemed lonely.

Harry just stood there looking at it, and shaking his head. "Some—old—giant," that's all he said.

"It's got plenty of gold up on top," Brent said; "now it remains to be seen if there's any gold down underneath—real, honest to goodness, gold. Anyhow, this is where the desperate deed was did. Come over here till I show you something."

Just as we were all starting to walk over to the tracks, I saw a bird—a big dark one—flying toward the top of that tree. All of a sudden when he got near it, he seemed to change to gold color. Then he went in among the branches and I couldn't see him. I told Harry and he said, "We're in an atmosphere of gold—everything is gold around here, even the sky. Look at that squirrel coming down to size us up. Kids, our fortunes are made—that's a balsam poplar, and I'll bet a doughnut, there's as much real gold underneath it as there is gold light up on top. The seed of that tree pushed its way up out of a bag of gold, and Alf gets his bicycle. We've hit it rich! What do you say, Roy?"

Gee whiz, I could hardly tell what he was saying, because I was watching that squirrel. He

came half way down the trunk and just stopped there upside down, looking at us. And he looked at the tent, too, as if he didn't know what to make of it. And then he cocked his head sideways, just as if he was listening to Harry.

"Got your shovels and your axes all ready?" that's what Harry was saying.

CHAPTER XXXIV

WE CAMP UNDER THE TREE

BRENT led the way over to the railroad tracks, then he began poking his foot against the big spikes that hold the tracks down on the ties.

He said, "See there? What do you make of that, Sherlock Holmes?"

Harry said, "I don't see anything unusual. What's the matter?"

Brent went back along the track a little way and began walking along the ties. "There's a spike, there's another, there's another, there's another," he kept saying, "and here's another—with a different kind of a head. Notice? More square—see?" He kept walking along. "Now there are one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight" and he kept walking along and counting up to about eleven or twelve "of those square headed spikes. See? They're different from the others and they were driven in after the others.

Can't foil the old Newburgh Sleuth. This is where the train was derailed.

"The way I see it is, those robbers ripped up the tracks for about ten or fifteen feet and set the ends apart and spread some leaves over the break. When the railroad people spiked the rail down again, they just happened to use spikes with heads of a little different shape. Then there was a lapse of twenty-five years—that's what they usually call it, isn't it, Pee-wee?—and, presto, along came the Boy Scouts. Nothing to it. Right here is where that hold-up occurred—you can take it from the Church Mice Patrol. Flowers and testimonials should be addressed to First B. S. Troop, Newburgh and sent prepaid."

I just blurted out, "Brent, you're a *wonder!*"

"You're *some* scout," Grove said.

Harry just kept shaking his head and then he said, "Brent, we've got to hand it to you fellows. Pee-wee did a pretty good little stunt in deduction himself, and the fact that these spikes are on the left side bears out what he said."

Then he told Brent about what Pee-wee had said, and Brent said, "Well, it seems we haven't got anything on Scout Harris, when it comes to deducing."

"Did you hunt for the tree?" Harry asked him.

Brent said, "No, because we weren't sure of there being any tree; and you weren't either. We came up the track hunting for signs of a derailed train, and we found them. It was as easy as pie."

"Some pie isn't so easy," Willie Wide-Awake said.

Brent said, "Alas, 'tis true!" in that funny way he has. I guess little Bill had had some experience, hey?

"Now come back to the tent and I'll show you something else," Brent said; "we found it in the bushes when we were collecting firewood. How about you? Are you game for camp-fire to-night?"

"You bet we are," I said; "I'd rather have a camp-fire any day than an auto trip."

"You mean any *night,*" Skinny spoke up.

"Isn't he getting just too clever for anything!" Grove said.

We went back to the tent under that great big tree, and Brent got out an old bar of iron with a flat end. It was all rusty and the rust had eaten into it so that Brent just pulled it against his knee and bent it. He said, "That's what they

did the trick with. Seems funny, doesn't it, to find that after all these years?"

"You bet it does," I said.

"Wonder just what happened here, hey?" he said.

We all sat down around outside the tent and it was awful nice there. It was just beginning to get dark. That gold colored place up at the point of the tree was kind of turned to brown. It was awful quiet all around. It was so still that I could hear something fall out of the tree and hit the ground. When I picked it up, I found it was just an acorn. I guess maybe it belonged to that squirrel.

"I like it under here," Skinny said; "I like it better than being in a house."

Harry took out the big envelope that had those secret papers (that's what Pee-wee called them) in it; and he just kind of glanced them over. He read the newspaper articles and Brent listened. Then he said, "Let's see—oh, this is about the tree. We called it the Dahadinee poplar, because that's what old what's-his-name called it. I can hardly see, it's getting dark so fast . . . 'trunk diameter of five or six feet . . . irregular, pyramidal open top . . . as moved by the wind . . .

makes a handsome object. . . .' Some old tree, huh?"

"It's a peach of a tree," Brent said.

Then for a little while none of us said anything. Gee, I don't know what we were all thinking about. Brent just held that old piece of bent, rusty iron, and kept marking in the ground with it. I know *I* was thinking about how funny it was, that away back years and years ago a robber should bury two bags of gold that had some seeds in them, and that a great big tree like this should grow up over the very place, just like we thought. A big tree that didn't belong there—that belonged away up in the north. I guess I must have been sort of dreaming, because all of a sudden, I knew Harry was reading from that old letter that Pee-wee had found in the car. They were all listening, while he skimmed over it.

" 'So . . . have lost all I have by this outrage of scoundrels . . . but I paid him in good measure . . . Watertown to care for dying . . . say I am rough diamond but human life sacred even more than gold. . . . So I will come back to you and home with no riches for all this work but much love which no scoundrel can steal. The best reason I would pay this scoundrel . . . in one of

these bags . . . for you to plant . . . nuthing but an adventure. I think more about how we can't have our bench under our Dahadinee poplar . . . with much love. . . .Thor.'

"Pretty good letter, hey?" Harry said. "Who do you suppose he was?"

Brent just shook his head. Then he said, "He was a rough and ready old scout with a heart as big as a ham. When it came to a showdown, he cared more about a tree for he and his precious Ann to sit under, than he did for a couple of bags of gold dust. He was *one lollapazuzza!*"

Harry just said, *"When it came to a showdown."*

"Probably on his way back from the Klondike, hey?" Brent said. "Lots of them came down across Canada. Maybe he and Ann lived up along the Dahadinee River when they were kids."

"No telling," Harry said.

Then nobody said anything, except Grove said we had better be starting our fire.

"And he was bringing these seeds home to her," Harry said, very quiet, "so they would grow up and they could have some kind of a tree at home—— Oh, I think he was just *splendid!*"

I knew he was just imitating Grace Bronson.

All of a sudden he jumped up and said, "Let's have one of those shovels. Pee-wee, and I'll make a dig—just for a tryout. Then we'll get down to business in the morning."

Pee-wee got up kind of slow and got a shovel out of the tent and handed it to Harry.

"Of course, we'll have to chop the whole business down to-morrow," Harry said, "and dig in around the roots.

"The gold dust will be pretty well mixed up with the earth right plunk under the tree. It'll be pretty hard to get at. But there are plenty of us to do the work and we're all scouts—except me. We're not afraid of work. We've got a wireless outfit to get, and a bicycle painted green. Are you all game for a hard day's work to-morrow?"

Brent was sitting there on the ground with his knees drawn up and he just said, "We're all scouts when it comes to a showdown."

"Righto," Harry said; *"when it comes to a showdown."*

CHAPTER XXXV

IT COMES TO A SHOWDOWN

MAYBE you'll say we were all crazy, but I should worry. Anyway, I'm going to tell you everything, just the way it happened.

While the rest of us were starting our campfire, Harry was digging up spades full of earth as close to the trunk of the tree as he could get the spade. Each time he would spread the earth out on the spade and examine it very carefully by the light of the fire.

"You're a swell lot of treasure hunters," he said; "leaving all the work to me."

"Wait till we get the fire burning up and we'll give you a hand," Brent said.

"That's the best kind of gold," little Bill spoke up; "that yellow flame."

"It turns everything to gold all of a sudden," even Pee-wee said; "look at the trunk of the tree."

"Some bunch of treasure hunters!" Harry

said "Pee-wee, I'm surprised at *you*. Where are your pan and your rolling-pin and your burlap bags? I thought you were Captain Kidd, Junior."

"It's time enough in the morning, isn't it?" the kid said. "Then we'll get to work in earnest. We have to get our fire started, don't we?"

"Oh, sure," Harry said.

"We belong to the Union," Brent said, "and we don't shovel dirt after three in the afternoon. We believe in the two hour day. Don't bother us."

Pretty soon the fire was burning up, and it made the tree all bright—kind of flickery, like. We could look away into the dark woods—they were awful black. But right near us it was bright, just like gold. There was an owl hooting somewhere—maybe he was up in that tree.

We all sat down around the fire to rest a minute. Harry pulled a log over close to the big trunk of the tree and out of the heat of the fire and sat down on it, and leaned back against the trunk. He said, "I guess I'll have my bench under the Dahadinee poplar. Look here, you fellows."

He held out his hand and in the middle of the palm was just a little yellow dust.

"It's gold!" Pee-wee shouted.

Brent said, "Yellow gold, by gum!"

We all just stood around him, looking at it; gee whiz, I just couldn't take my eyes off it.

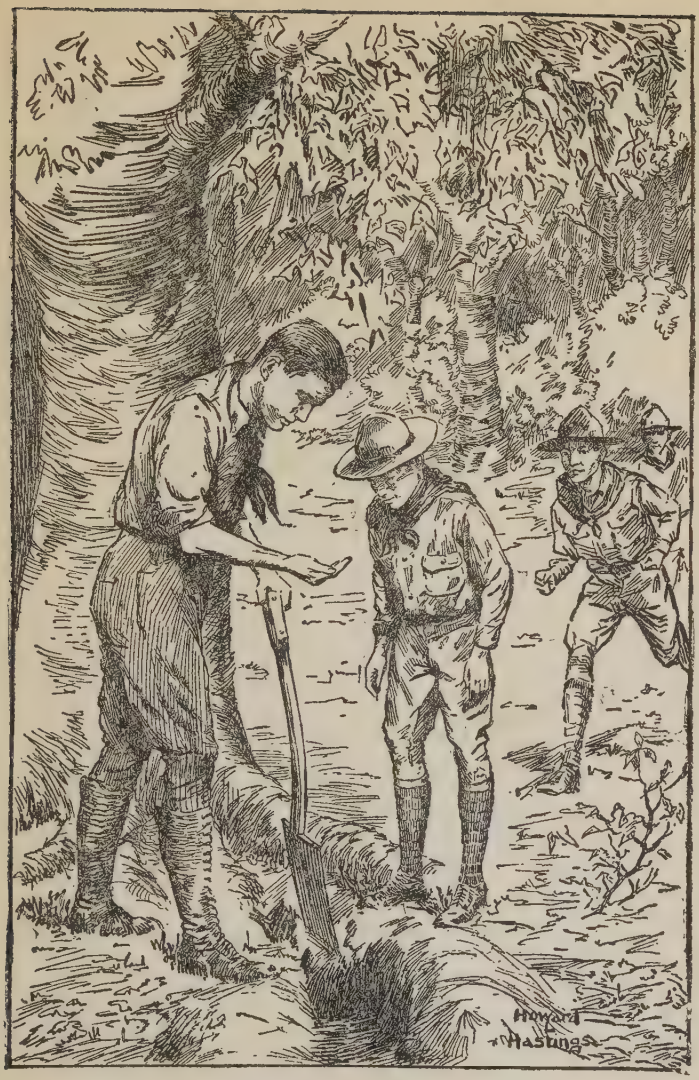
"There's a clincher for you," Harry said; "the treasure is here all right. All we have to use is some elbow grease to get it. You see we'll have to chop her down first, because if we go to undermining her, she may fall. Then all we'll have to do is to dig around among the upper roots, and keep our eyes open, and scrape up the dust. We won't get anywhere near as much as was here, but we'll get enough to buy some wireless outfits and bicycles and things,—or I'm mistaken. Of course, the bags must have rotted away years ago. Put some wood on the fire, Grove."

"It shows how much those seeds wanted to live to push right up through those bags," Pee-wee said.

Harry said, "I declare! Listen to Pirate Harris!"

"You think you're smart, don't you?" Pee-wee said. It was awful funny.

"Oh, sure, they wanted to live all right," Harry



IN THE MIDDLE OF HIS PALM WAS A LITTLE YELLOW DUST.

Roy Blakeley's Silver Fox Patrol.

said; "a lot they cared about gold. A scout is a friend to gold——"

"He's a friend to everything that lives," little Alf spoke up.

Brent Gaylong went over and put some wood on the fire and the blaze jumped up, and everything around there was all flickered up and bright. Then he lay down on his back and put one knee up over the other and looked up into the sky. That's always the way he does when he's around camp-fire.

After about a minute he said, "Scouts, I have an idea. This trip is a failure—it's commonplace. We've been trying to get some originality and pep into our travels and we haven't succeeded. We planned an escape from jail and it fell through. We weren't even sent to jail; I'm ashamed to admit it, but it's the truth. You fellows were on the point of being sent to jail and then, just when everything was going nicely and you seemed likely to have an adventure, along came some old judge and put one over on you—gave you a check for five hundred bucks. It's discouraging."

Harry said, "I know it,"—awful funny.

Then Brent said, "Every story I ever read

about going after buried treasure, the men who went after it found it. I was in hopes our little story might have a different ending—just for the sake of originality. But nothing doing; it seems we're going to go home loaded down with gold."

"I know it," Harry said; "I'm sorry. I kind of like this bench under the Dahadinee poplar; it makes me think of old Thor or whatever his name was, and Ann."

For about a minute nobody said anything; we just sprawled around watching the fire. The big tree stood there, you know, kind of dignified and solemn like.

"What time shall we start chopping and digging?" Brent asked.

But nobody said anything. Then, good night, Pee-wee Harris, Captain Kidd, Jr., spoke up.

"What's the good of gold, anyway?" he said. "We had a lot of fun, didn't we?"

"How about the rolling-pin and the burlap bags and the pickaxe and the shovels?" Harry said.

"We had a lot of fun, didn't we?" Pee-wee shouted at him. "Alf is right."

"Right?" Harry said.

"Yes, *right;* that's what I said," the kid yelled;

"a scout cares about everything that lives. If you were a scout, you'd know that."

"I?" Harry said.

"Yes, you," Pee-wee shouted; "I'm not going to help chop down this big tree just to get some gold dust. If you think we're a gold dust troop, you're mistaken! We're *scouts,* that's what we are!"

"Goodness me," Harry said; "you seem to be on the side of the girls now. You and Ann and Grace Bronson——"

"Girls are all right," Pee-wee shouted; "I know all about girls; I know more about them than you do!"

"I don't claim to know anything about them," Harry said; "and I don't claim to know anything about the scouts, either. I think they're all crazy."

"I don't mind being called crazy," Grove said.

Harry said, "So, you're with him, hey?"

"Yes, and I'm with him, too," I said.

"So am I," Skinny shouted.

"If it rained this tree would keep us dry," one of Brent's patrol, spoke up.

"I like trees best," little Willie Wide-Awake piped up.

"It seems there's a mutiny," Harry said.

Brent said, "That was more than I dared to hope for. I've always longed to be mixed up in a mutiny. I'll be the leader of this one."

"Well," Harry said, "all I know is, that we formed this party to come up here after buried treasure, and that we came equipped with rolling-pins and saucepans and pickaxes, and now it seems we're talking about trees. You're a queer lot, you scouts."

I said, "Yes, and you feel just the same as we do, too. You try to make me think you don't agree with Grace Bronson."

Harry and Brent just looked at each other and laughed.

Then Harry said, "Well, girls and scouts, they're a mystery to me. I'm here for business, but, of course, if there's a mutiny——"

"Let's take a vote," Grove said.

"All right," Pee-wee shouted; "I vote to leave this tree where it is. We had plenty of fun."

"I vote to have some eats," I said.

"Second the motion," one of Brent's scouts spoke up. Believe me, a scout is a friend of eats.

"You won't get me to help chop it down," Grove said.

"I'll stick up for you," Willie Wide-Awake sang out.

"I seem to have a large minority," Harry said; "how about you, Brent?"

Brent said, "Oh, I vote for the original ending. I'm a friend to everything that's different. I say, let's not find the treasure—let's beat the story books at their own game. If Roy ever writes up all this nonsense, why the readers will think that we're all going to end up millionaires."

"They'll get left," Pee-wee said; "we're just plain scouts. It—it came to a showdown."

Harry said, "Well, it seems as if the old Dahadinee poplar wins. I think I'll leave this bench right here underneath it, in memory of Thor and Ann."

"And Grace Bronson," I said.

"Put some more sticks on the fire, Roy, and we'll take a full vote," Harry said, all the while smiling. I always kid him about Grace Bronson whenever I get a chance.

"Think she'll be satisfied?" Harry said.

Just as I was putting some more sticks on the fire I happened to look up where the trunk of the big tree was all kind of gold color, on account of the camp-fire blaze. That's the kind

of gold that scouts like best. And right there in the light, about half way down the trunk was that squirrel, standing upside-down, and cocking his head sideways at Harry Donnelle, just as if he were waiting to find out how we decided.

THE END

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By PERCY KEESE FITZHUGH

Roy Blakeley

In one of the books which Roy Blakeley and his patrol collect from a kindly old gentleman, in a book-drive for the soldiers, Pee-wee Harris discovers what he believes to be a sinister looking memorandum, and he becomes convinced that the old gentleman is a genuine spy. But the laugh is on Pee-wee, as usual, for the donor of the books turns out to be an author, and the suspicious memorandum is only a literary mark. The author, however, is so pleased with the boys' patriotism and amused at Pee-wee's zeal, that he loans them his houseboat, in which they make the trip up the Hudson to their beloved Temple Camp, which every boy who has read the TOM SLADE BOOKS will be glad to see once more.

Roy Blakeley's Adventures in Camp

Roy Blakeley and his patrol are found in this book once more happily established in camp. A rivalry between the Silver Foxes and the other patrols springs up in the quest for Spruce and Black Walnut for which the Government is in need. Roy and his friends incur the wrath of a land owner, but the doughty Pee-wee saves the situation and the wealthy landowner as well, when he guides him out of the deep forest where he has lost himself. The boys wake up one morning to find Black Lake flooded far over its banks, and the solving of this mystery furnishes some exciting reading.

Roy Blakeley, Pathfinder

Roy and his trusty comrades having come to Temple Camp by water, resolve that they will make the journey home by foot. On the way they capture a leopard escaped from a circus, which exciting adventure brings about an amusing acquaintance with the strange people who belong to the traveling show. The boys are instrumental in solving a deep mystery, and finding among the show people one who has long been missing and for whom search has been made the country over.

Roy Blakeley's Camp on Wheels

This is the story of the wild and roaming career of a ramshackle old railroad car which has been given ROY and his companions for a troop meeting place. The boys who have spent a hard day cleaning and repairing the car, fall asleep in it. In the darkness of the night, and by a singular error of the railroad people, the car is "taken up" by a freight train and instead of being left at a designated point several miles below, is carried westward, so that when the boys awake in the morning they find themselves in a country altogether strange and new. The story tells of the many and exciting adventures in this car as it journeys from place to place.

Roy Blakeley's Silver Fox Patrol

In the car which Roy Blakeley and his friends have for a meeting place is discovered an old faded letter, dating from the Klondike gold days, and it appears to intimate the location of certain bags of gold, buried by a train robber who had held up a train bringing passengers home from the Canadian Northwest. The quest for this treasure is made in an automobile and the strange adventures on this trip constitute the story.

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THE TOM SLADE books have the official endorsement and recommendation of THE BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA. In vivid story form they tell of Boy Scout ways, and how they help a fellow grow into a manhood of which America may be proud.

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On the day when this hapless urchin, hauling up his one strand of suspender, peeked through a hole in the fence at the scouts who were practicing their game, he was lost—lost to the cause of evil, and his abdication as king of the hoodlums is significant and amusing. From this point on his progress is told step by step through the medium of wholesome, sprightly adventure and quick action, each story embodying a phase of the carefully worked out scout program.

The unwritten text of this whole panorama of crowding adventures and side-splitting mirth is that there is no sport in being a hoodlum and that if a boy wishes to have the time of his life he would better throw away his missiles and stop chalking the sidewalks and get out into the woods and on the water where there there *is* "something doing."

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